

GENOVA



THE SOUL OF
THE PEOPLE



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THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

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unfired translation

Laura G. Pratt

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

A DRAMA

BY
MARCHESA LAURA GROPALLO

*Translated from the Italian by
V. Sydney Rothschild*

New York
STURGIS & WALTON
COMPANY
1917

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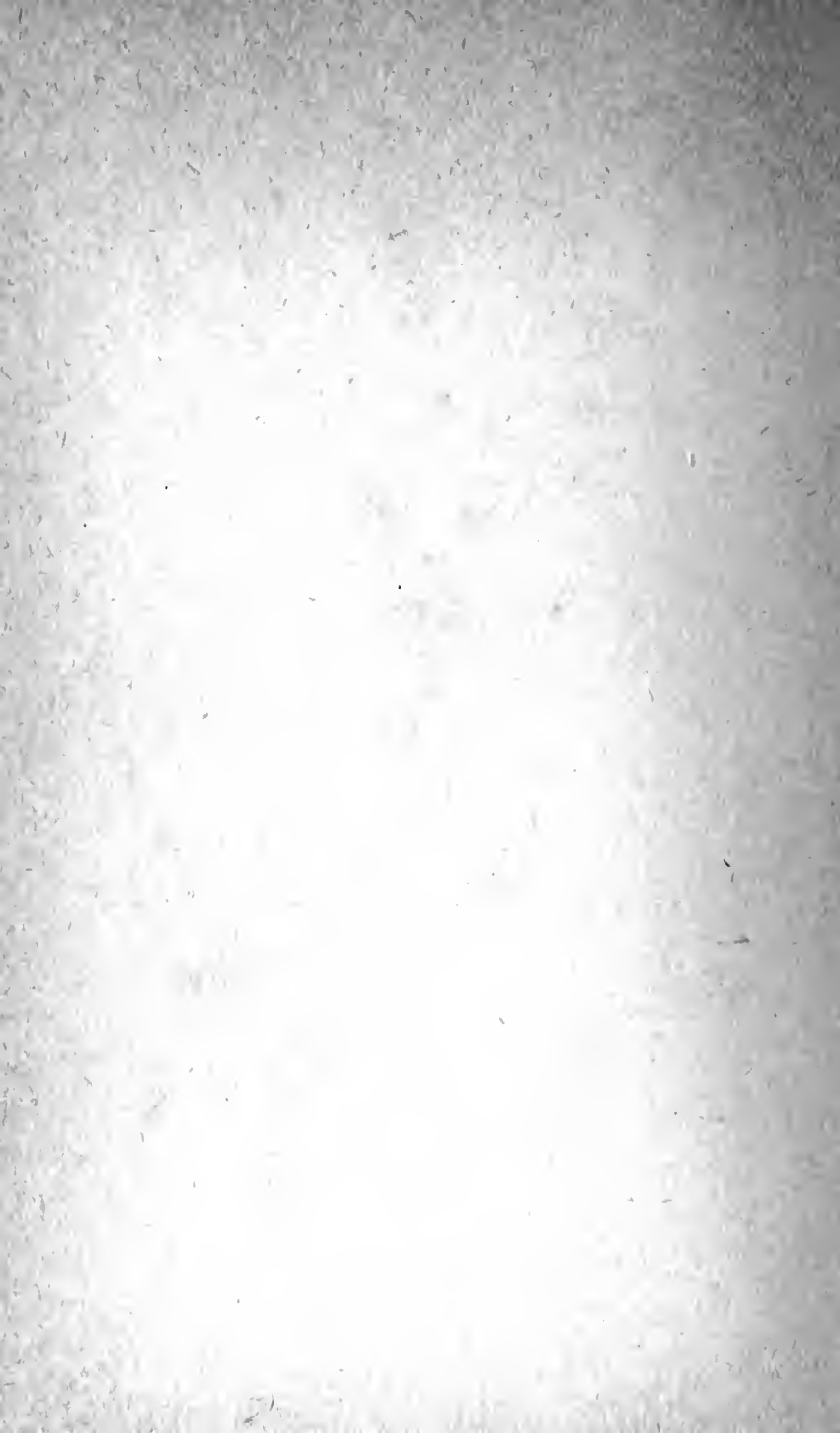
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Under title " 1746 " this drama was under rehearsal in Genoa early in 1915 when Italy was neutral in the Great War.

The Italian Government, fearing that the production at this time would stir up hostilities with their hereditary enemy, the Austrian, banned the play from the Italian stage.

The author is related to a number of the noted families portrayed herein and has had recourse to records insuring the historical accuracy of the text.



CHARACTERS

| | | |
|---------------------|---|--|
| BIANCA MARSANO, | } | <i>Daughter of the patriot Botta-Adorno.</i> |
| MARIA BOTTA-ADORNO, | } | <i>Niece of the traitor Botta-Adorno.</i> |

GIACOMO LOMELLINI, *patriot, son of Senator Agostino Lomellini.*

MARSHAL BOTTA-ADORNO, *a born Genoese, in the service of the enemy.*

DOGE BRIGNOLE SALE.

| | | |
|-------------|---|-----------------|
| D'ORIA | } | |
| GRIMALDI | | |
| LOMELLINI | | |
| GAVOTTI | | |
| DEFORNARI | | |
| CENTURIONE | } | <i>Senators</i> |
| IMPERIALI | | |
| PALLAVICINI | | |
| FIESCHI | | |
| CATTANEO | } | |

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-----------------|
| BALILLA | } | |
| ALESSANDRO ROLLA | | |
| ANSELMO GIACOBINI | | |
| ROCA | | |
| MASSA | | |
| PASTORE | | |
| BEPPE | | |
| BACICCIA | } | <i>patriots</i> |

CHARACTERS

GIGIO, *a barber.*

AN ADJUTANT-IN-CHIEF TO THE MARSHAL.

TWO AUSTRIAN OFFICERS.

USHER.

Other Senators, Austrian Soldiers, Servants. Genoese
men, women, and boys of the people.

Time: December, 1746, War of the Pragmatic Succession.

Place: Genoa, in the hands of Austria.

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE



FIRST ACT

A tavern in Sottoripa. Small marble tables; stools, etc., etc. To left stage the counter, behind which the old tavern-keeper Baciccia is sleeping, his head resting on his elbows. Behind the counter towards corner of room a small door leads to the back-shop. To right stage a door, which is the entrance-door of the tavern.

On raising of curtain the door is heard to squeak, but only sufficiently to awaken Baciccia. He is a man of over sixty, but still robust and active.

BACICCIA

[To boy, who enters.] Hallo, cunning one, you are always one of the first!

[Balilla, a good looking precocious boy of fourteen years, full of energy and life, seats himself with importance at the table.]

BALILLA

Now come along, good Baciccia, bring me something to drink. . . .

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BACCICIA

[*Pouring out some stuff out of his jars into a tumbler brings it to him.*] Pooh! what importance!!! And yer've not all yer teeth!

BALILLA

[*Showing his teeth.*] But they know how to bite!

BACCICIA

[*In a low voice.*] Any news?

BALILLA

[*Also half loud.*] Eh! Things go.

[*Enters Rolla; Roca follows him in slowly.*]

ROLLA

[*To Roca.*] Come in — come in — we are among friends here. Good evening, Baccicia!

BACCICIA

Good evening, Signor Alessandro. [*With a move of his chin to Roca as asking who he is.*]

ROLLA

Have no fear, he is a friend, a brave man, he, the same as we, is tired to death of the foreign rascals usurping our liberties in Genoa to-day.

ROCA

Not trusting me? . . . I have a large shop in

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Campetto. Well, to it these Austrians come and fill their pockets all of them . . . but of paying none of them dream — the bullies! . . . the swine!

BALILLA

We shall soon make an end of that.

ROCA

[*Looking at him stupefied.*] But . . .

BACICCIA

Don't worry. We all vouch for Balilla. . . . He is the son of good people and is apprentice to a dyer, a pearl of a man. He is a fiery youth and full of energy and with all that, exceedingly prudent in spite of his only being fourteen.

ROCA

[*Seating himself at a table.*] The main thing is to be sure of your people.

ROLLA

[*Taking a seat at the table at which Roca sits which is near to Balilla and patting in a friendly manner Balilla's head.*] He'll do! He's a good lad. [*To Baciccia.*] A half fiasco of that good wine here and two glasses. . . . [*Continuing his speech.*] Yes, already Balilla has rendered us invaluable services . . . [*to Baciccia approaching*

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with the wine and the glasses] — and the others?

BACCICIA

[*Turning his eyes to a large clock which stands near the counter.*] It is not quite nine. . . . Perhaps my old clock is a little fast.

ROCA

Are we many?

ROLLA

It is risky to put one's trust in too many. Always one of us calls in the other . . . precisely like I — you . . . we have the noble Giacomo Lomellini.

BACCICIA

The Senator's son.

ROLLA

And Giacobini, a public accountant; he knows many people and strikes the humour of all.

ROCA

Yes. The business men's and the traders'.

ROLLA

Yes; even so; am I too not a broker, I? But we have also artists two of them; and they carry with bad grace the slavery which has been thrust on us by these catch-polls of Austrians. Ah, if

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only these Austrians all could be sent to the devil.

BALILLA

They will get there, never fear.

BACICCIA

I have little doubt we shall presently succeed in throwing off the hated yoke.

BALILLA

None of us here can surely have any doubt on that score, else why are we here?

ROLLA

[*Sighing.*] The difficulties are so great . . . the Austrians are so very numerous, and we are but few. . . .

BALILLA

The hour will come when we are many.

ROLLA

[*With a sigh.*] If only the Senate would support us . . . the recent capitulation of Genoa was really ignominious.

BALILLA

[*Jumping to his feet.*] It's the people in the long run will have to support us, will have to fight with all their might. . . . Not many days ago

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the Austrians came to our city, I was in Polcevera when the people rose in arms. . . .

BACCICIA

Yes. And just then as if by miracle to help us the flood of the Polcevera came, but the craven Senate instead of seeing their advantage, sent at once emissaries to negotiate with that Austrian renegade Marshal Botta-Adorno.

ROCA

Bah; to-day Genoa is theirs, the mischief is done; we must try to undo it.

BALILLA

[*Looking at the clock.*] It is getting late . . . and the others?

ROLLA

I don't understand; Bianca is always so punctual.

ROCA

Ah! Is there also a woman among your number?

BALILLA

[*Disdainfully.*] Ay, also a woman.

ROLLA

Don't ever speak that way of her again, you understand?

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[*To Roca.*] She's an extraordinary lass, this one.

ROCA

Of the people?

ROLLA

Yes.

BACICCIA

And here we do not agree. To the people I belong. I know them therefore better than Signor Alessandro. Well, I will swear this girl belongs not to the people.

ROLLA

Nevertheless she speaks just like you, Baciccia, in choicest Genoese dialect.

BACICCIA

May be; but she is not of us, not of our blood.

ROCA

Then none of you should halt at such suspicions; she might be dangerous; a spy.

BALILLA

Oh! as for that, no. She is better patriot than all of us. She would be the first to sell her life for the holy cause of sending these brigands of Austrians to hell! She hates them more, much more than any of us, if that were possible.

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ROCA

Have you not investigated who she can possibly be, if she is not of the people?

ROLLA

Why? I trust her. Besides, if one must continually beware of spies these days one can do nothing at all. Who is safe in our situation in the predicament the town is in? We are compelled to trust each other.

BALILLA

[*Showing his fist.*] We must above all rely on this.

[*Enters briskly and gaily Bianca with a stevedore from the docks, Beppe, by name. Bianca is a pretty girl of 18 years. Is dressed like one of the people, speaks loud and affects vulgar manners.—Must be disguised to be almost unrecognisable as Maria of the second act.—*]

BIANCA

Good evening, good evening. . . .

THE MEN

[*Without getting up.*] Good evening.

ROLLA

You are late, Bianca.

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BIANCA

[*Seating herself at one of the tables, and knocking roughly on it with her knuckles, whilst she nods to Baciccia to bring her a drink.*] A lemonade. [*Changing voice.*] I have already been at the door here before . . . and then turned back.

ROCA

[*Studying her.*] And why?

[*Bianca, before she answers looks interrogatively at Roca.*]

ROLLA

[*Answering the look of Bianca.*] He is a friend of mine, the merchant Roca, whom I promised to bring here. [*Smiling.*] Yes, he can be trusted.

BIANCA

Good. Well, I am late, because it seemed to me that I have been followed to-night. You understand . . . it would have compromised both you all and me. . . . Having already approached the door, I had to stroll off and make a detour.

BALILLA

And then?

BIANCA

It seems, as if it was a false alarm. When

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we again approached there was nobody to be seen.
Is it not so, Beppe?

BEPPE

We have seen nobody.

BIANCA

And where are our other friends?

ROLLA

Ah! Here come Signor Giacomo and Anselmo.

[*Enter Giacomo Lomellini and Anselmo Giacobini.*]

[*All exchange good-evening greetings simply, without shaking hands just as if they were at home.*]

ROLLA

[*Introducing Roca to the arrivals.*] My friend Roca of whom I have spoken to you already.
[*To Roca.*] Signor Giacomo Lomellini; Signor Anselmo Giacobini, accountant. [*To Giacomo.*]
Any news?

GIACOMO

Most important news. They have abolished the decree, the one the Empress-Queen Maria Theresa signed upon the insistence of Pope Benedetto XIV and his Nuncio Spinola at Vienna. By that decree you recall she absolved Genoa from

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paying the third million to her Austrians. Now this third million *must* be paid, and at once.

[*All, but in low voice, whilst no one loses sight of the door.*]

"That's impossible"—"How to pay it?"—"Where get the money?"—etc. . . . etc. . . .

GIACOBINI

If you ask me, I say at once without hesitation, that it is impossible; I am a public accountant; I suppose I know how to keep books; and I say, it is impossible to pay the sum.

BEPPE

Pay? And with what money, I should like to know, while all commerce is at a stand-still? I, who in times past unloaded in the port bale after bale of merchandise, now I unload none . . . the warehouses are empty . . . in the harbour there is nothing.

ROLLA

That's easily understood. England has blocked the Port and holds all the merchant vessels in her grip.

BEPPE

[*In wrath.*] And they steal all the cargoes. [*Laughing in wrath.*] So there remains nothing to be discharged in the port. I tell you, it is

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a misery, one dies of hunger . . . it cannot last so; better die!

GIACOMO

The Empress has committed an outrage. She promised to waive that third million; she has broken her word. . . .

ROLLA

Bah! For a German sovereign the signed agreement is merely a scrap of paper! . . .

[Enter Pastore and Massa. Exchanging greetings with the others.]

ROLLA

[Pointing out again Roca to the new arrivals.]
My friend Roca. *[Pointing at Pastore.]* Pastore, the noted painter. *[Pointing at Massa.]* Massa, the sculptor.

PASTORE

Have you heard?

GIACOMO

What, the story of the third million? We were just speaking about it. The Senators are in despair and furious. To-morrow my father and the Senator Cattaneo shall ask the Marshal the reason for this unexpected and villainous act.

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MASSA

It will be of no use; better as it is. The more of this sort of treachery the quicker the people will move.

BIANCA

Yes, every one will be stirred up, and it is necessary, that all the people shall take part.

BALILLA

We must revolt against them; all the people in mass must revolt!

PASTORE

Better to die than be slaves; for Country the greatest sacrifices are light!

ROLLA

Bravo poeta!

PASTORE

There would be no poetry, if there was no love of Country!

MASSA

And when we have chased them out, we shall build a monument to Liberty.

BACCICIA

That's where our sculptor comes in! . . .
[*All laugh.*]

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GIACOMO

For me it can't come too soon; we must make haste.

ROLLA

Right, boys . . . but first we must make our plans known, intensify our propaganda . . . so far we are few.

BEPPE

Few? Why, all the coolies in the harbour come with me.

GIACOBINI

All my friends hold to us.

PASTORE

And mine too.

MASSA

And mine.

BALILLA

And how about mine!

ROLLA

All that is right enough, but we must enlist larger forces. We must make a more extensive campaign, and organise. And here the question arises, how can we risk it, if we have not the support of our Senate? Without that support no revolt will bring any lasting change. Behind the people must be the Senate . . . otherwise there

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will be a massacre without gain to us. The Austrian soldiers are well armed and will be much stronger than we are. . . . We must not forget that these bullies have confiscated all our arms. . . .

BIANCA

[*In low voice.*] We have some yet. . . .

BACCICIA

But so few . . . and Signor Alessandro is right, without the support of the Senate there will be a massacre without bringing us on any further.

ROCA

It would be criminal to expose the people to useless bloodshed.

GIACOBINI

Everything can be accomplished, everything gained so long as we place our faith in success.

BALILLA

And then?

GIACOMO

As a matter of fact, the Senate is indirectly with us to-day. Do you believe for a moment that if our Government were not willing to support the agitation against the Austrians, which is now so openly brewing, it would not have kept this last knowledge from the people of the enormous new

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war levy of the Austrians? No, no, the Government feels as we do, that the powder-pot is overful, and requires but a spark to ignite it.

GIACOBINI

If it is so, there is only one thing to be done. You, as son of the Senator, are in a position to get from the Senate a more explicit declaration.

GIACOMO

I am always entirely at your disposal; but how can one hope that the Senators, who must forcibly be prudent, could risk giving so openly their adherence to our cause? No, we must lure it from them by some surprise. But for this business, I being too well known, that alone would make it almost impossible for me to even approach them.

BIANCA

Well, then, *I* will volunteer to get the agreement of the Senate.

[*Omnes with different expressions.*]

"You?" "How?" "How could *you* do it?"

BIANCA

[*Calmly.*] Yes, I . . . I shall make the attempt. . . . I shall make my plans carefully . . . and I shall hope to succeed. . . .

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BACCICIA

[*Gazing at her.*] But how shall it be possible for you, girl of the people, to get near such high personages? . . .

BIANCA

Depend upon our feminine subtlety.

GIACOBINI

Too true that quality cannot be overestimated; nevertheless Baccicia is right; success of the enterprise would too much depend on Bianca and it would be miraculous if she could even get a hearing.

BIANCA

Have faith in me.

BEPPE

Women get everything they want; my wife, if she wants something, gets it always.

BALILLA

Well, let the women set at driving the Austrians out of the country then!

BACCICIA

[*Whilst they laugh, Baccicia, with a twinkling of his eyes calls Giacomo to his counter. Arriving there he addresses him aloud.*] Signor Giacomo, one word; I owe you still some money

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from last night. You have given me too much.
. . . [*He searches in a wooden box, and nodding to Giacomo with the money in his hand, he speaks in a low voice. It is evident that he is speaking of Bianca. The conversation of the others does not stop.*]

PASTORE

At all costs, Bianca, I don't know; whether we should accept your generous offer. . . . Expose you, a girl . . .

BIANCA

I am not affrighted at anything. . . .

ROLLA

We cannot but thank you.

BIANCA

[*Laughing.*] You must thank me when I have brought the agreement of the Senate.

BEPPE

It therefore remains understood that way.
[*Getting up.*] Baciccia, the bill. . . .

[*Baciccia, whom the others also call, comes forward followed by Giacomo.*]

BEPPE

[*After having paid.*] And now I go; it's late.

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ROCA

I shall be going too.

ROLLA

And yet there remain many things to be decided.
When do we meet again?

PASTORE

[*To Bianca.*] When do you think you will
have fulfilled your mission?

BIANCA

I must have two or three days' time; believe me,
I am anxious also to have it over with.

GIACOBINI

We must not let the fever that is in the air die
away.

ROLLA

The Austrians are suspiciously watching every
one now. The other day two of them followed in
the streets two of our girls, two sisters; the girls
were near their own house and so slipped in; but
these loafers broke down the door and rushed
after them. The father was not there; the
mother, a weak old woman, could not defend
them; but the girls, two veritable Genoese, did not
let the foreign devils intimidate them, and ran to
the window crying for help with all their might.

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Some of our men ran up and cudgelled the rascals.

BACICCIA

Really, it pleases them to take everything from us, our wives, our money. . . .

BEPPE

And our merchandise.

[*Omnes in chorus.*]

Enough! Enough! !

ROLLA

Let us then decide: As soon as Bianca has fulfilled her mission she will advise Baciccia, and he in turn will advise us in our abodes. Is that understood?

GIACOMO

Very well. So be it!

BACICCIA

And now — I close.

BALILLA

What a hurry. . . . Wait at least until we see whether we can go out freely. [*He opens door a little and looks out.*] Nobody.

ROLLA

Well; let us profit of the moment; and as soon as we are out we disperse.

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[Going to the door all wish each other good-bye. Giacomo and Bianca hold back.]

GIACOMO

[To Bianca with some hesitation.] I should like to speak a word with you.

BIANCA

With me? But every one is going.

GIACOMO

Let the others go! It is better, we dribble out little by little.

BIANCA

As you like.

[Baciccia comes back, pretending he doesn't see Bianca and Giacomo, puts some glasses and bottles on the counter, and then disappears into the back-shop.]

BIANCA

[Who has been waiting for Giacomo to speak.]
Well?

GIACOMO

[Always with hesitation.] I wanted to tell you . . . you have undertaken a very difficult task. . . . It's not easy to obtain the agreement of the Senate, to get it for us.

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BIANCA

That I know.

GIACOMO

Ah!

BIANCA

[*A little ironically.*] You are surprised, that I realise the importance of the mission that has been entrusted to me. . . .

GIACOMO

That you have assumed, you mean. . . . That is very different. . . .

BIANCA

[*Putting her hands on her hips.*] And is one allowed to ask, wherein lies the difference?

GIACOMO

[*Always as above.*] But in this . . . where none thought, that you . . . why you risk your life . . . and your education . . . can you have . . . the experience . . . can you succeed . . . fulfil your mission . . . incumbrances everywhere . . . the thing is not so easy. . . .

BIANCA

I understand; you want to convey to me, that a woman of the lower classes is not far enough advanced to achieve it.

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GIACOMO

Exactly.

BIANCA

[*Always a little ironically.*] But who tells you, that I perform my mission directly?

GIACOMO

[*Alarmed.*] Ah! You want to personify some one else.

BIANCA

I have charged myself with a commission, and it is for me to choose the means. Don't you think so?

GIACOMO

Certainly.

BIANCA

You say that without conviction.

GIACOMO

[*After a little hesitation; but decidedly and gazing Bianca right in the face.*] Yours is a risky way.

BIANCA

[*Always as above.*] And why? I can possibly have a girl friend, who from her side is the friend of a high personality, as Bacciccia says. You know these things happen; neither all men,

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nor all women are saints when it comes to love affairs, by its influence one can get many things.

GIACOMO

[*Looking more seriously.*] But that's just it, then too many persons become involved, in cases of such delicacy, of such importance, this method is always dangerous. We must seriously think it over.

BIANCA

Oh! I only ventured this scheme to say something; I may choose another way. . . . [*Long silence.*] Why don't you say something?

GIACOMO

Because it seems to me that you withhold something from me.

BIANCA

[*Laughing.*] Exactly.

GIACOMO

Ah!

BIANCA

Yes. . . . Just to punish you. . . .

GIACOMO

To punish me?

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BIANCA

Do you think that I did not notice your manœuvres with Baciccia?

GIACOMO

Allow me . . .

BIANCA

I know what you wish to say . . . but first we must set matters right. I should have said, Baciccia's manœuvres with you.

GIACOMO

Well?

BIANCA

Do you believe that I have not remarked for some time that Baciccia watches me? He mistrusts me; probably he does me the honour to take me for a spy.

GIACOMO

Oh!

BIANCA

I know in you such a doubt never could have originated, but because of Baciccia's doubts, to-night you also begin to doubt.

GIACOMO

Let us speak out frankly. Baciccia has convinced me that you take hold of a very difficult mission in a rather free and easy way.

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BIANCA

Supposing on the contrary. I could attempt to gravely show you that I realised very well the importance of the task. In that case the burden of proof for me would be still more difficult; for to be able to undertake to carry out my project among the high people, I might then conceivably have to prove to you that these humble clothes I now wear are really not even my own. And then if I were not one of the common people, although I have all the appearance of such, I say, if I were not? What then?

GIACOMO

There is truth in what you say . . . but admit . . .

BIANCA

What? I have given you no reason whatever to doubt who I am.

GIACOMO

[*Passionately.*] No, no, that never entered my mind!

BIANCA

But it sufficed that Baciccia whispered you but one word to put you on the *qui vive*.

GIACOMO

Bianca! The circumstances in which we live,

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what we are fighting for, are so grave, that they fully justify all precautions. What does the person count, in face of our fervent desire to save our native city? I have for myself as well as for my companions the responsibility of all that we are doing here to liberate our beloved Genoa. I have therefore no right to desist from examining into any doubt that arises, if it only but enters into the mind of any of my friends. I would be running too great a risk if the facts should later prove that their suspicions were true, had I not taken every precaution. You understand me?

BIANCA

[*In an ironical voice.*] Perfectly.

GIACOMO

And I repeat it to you, in this case I myself never doubted you, on the contrary, . . . [*Timidly.*] I have fostered . . . a great sympathy for you. . . . I have never dared to tell you that; . . . your conduct, your reserve is perfection itself.

BIANCA

[*As above.*] I am glad you understand that I am an honest girl in spite of the appearance of my rather independent, very easy life. Naturally, we girls of the lower classes enjoy a much greater freedom than the ladies of your class . . . for in-

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stance . . . here it is late night; we are out at all hours.

GIACOMO

You have never allowed any of us to accompany you home.

BIANCA

There would lurk a further danger in so exposing myself. I court no dangers, and would face none, were it not for our cause — our great cause.

GIACOMO

O, I do not know where you live even . . . know nothing of your home life.

BIANCA

I told you already; I live with my father . . . at home. My father is very good and in truth he feels like I; the others of my family do not, and it is also for this reason that I take care . . . great care not to be seen with any one.

GIACOMO

Under such circumstances you do well to be cautious. . . . But of me you need have no fear, you need fear nothing. . . . I should certainly never dare to fail of respect . . .

BIANCA

[*Somewhat harsh.*] How good of you.

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GIACOMO

[*A little mortified.*] You dislike my having said —

BIANCA

[*Laughingly.*] What? That you have a little sympathy for me? Why have you told me! I was so glad you hadn't before. . . . We are in such different circumstances . . . what would be the use?

GIACOMO

I do not see what harm could result out of it . . . if admitted . . . that even you . . . as at times it seems to me . . . you too had a little sympathy for me . . . well, what bad could result, if between us . . . a more intimate tie existed, more friendly . . . more than between our other companions.

BIANCA

[*Observing silence.*]

GIACOMO

You don't answer? And why?

BIANCA

Giacomo, you cause me pain . . . do not insist . . . say no more . . . let the subject drop. . . . You are a gentleman. . . . I . . . I am but a girl of the people . . . and I am as you have

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recognised an honest girl. . . . Further words between us can consequently lead to nothing . . . nevertheless misunderstanding between us will not improve our relations which must remain simple and straight-forward, so as not to prejudice the task which we unitedly aim to achieve.

GIACOMO

[*Grasping her hand.*] You are right, Bianca! And I beg your pardon . . . for having spoken. On the other subject of your mission, I have been forced to speak to you even at the risk of offending you by an unjust suspicion. . . . I went too far, I feel it now. . . . I beg you will pardon me . . .

BIANCA

Let us not speak about it further; we have unfolded our thoughts and that does no harm. Moreover you have calmed your conscience of a suspicion which stupid Baciccia had awakened in you, and I have the assurance henceforth of your good and loyal spirit.

GIACOMO

[*Who cannot decide to let Bianca's hand go.*] I thank you.

BIANCA

[*Withdrawing her hand gently.*] And now let us go! It is late.

ACT I.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

GIACOMO

Indeed, it is late; are you sure you do not wish me to accompany you home? Now that we have explained ourselves?

BIANCA

[*Lively.*] No, no, I told you I must be very cautious. You had better inform Baciccia that we are going. Good night!

GIACOMO

[*Goes with her to the door.*] Good night!
[*Like a child, after a short hesitation.*] Bianca?

BIANCA

[*Who has reached the threshold of the door, turns round.*] Well?

GIACOMO

Are you sure you are not angry?

BIANCA

[*Laughing.*] But no, but no, good night! . . .
[*Exit.*]

GIACOMO

[*Thoughtfully returns to front of stage; then suddenly he calls loudly:*] Baciccia!

CURTAIN

SECOND ACT

Sumptuous room in a Palace at Sampierdarena (in the west end of modern Genoa). Genoese velvet on walls, ornate chandeliers, large paintings on ceiling and over the marble manteled fireplaces.

At rising of curtain, room is empty. Shortly after in back of room portières are parted and enter Senator Francesco Cattaneo, Senator Agostino Lomellini and the latter's son Giacomo.

ORDERLY-OFFICER

[Who leads them into room.] If you will be so kind as to wait, his Excellency the Marshal will join you presently. *[Exit with a bow.]*

CATTANEO

Will you or shall I speak?

LOMELLINI

You speak!

CATTANEO

It is a hard mission.

LOMELLINI

Circumstances compel us to be here. How can

ACT II.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

we, how shall we ever be able to pay that third million?

CATTANEO

We must not forget to insist that the Empress-Queen Maria Theresa absolutely promised us if not *altogether* to dismiss at least to extend this payment.

GIACOMO

[*With sarcasm.*] The Empress promised at Vienna to retract her words at Genoa.

LOMELLINI

Ladies' sport . . .

CATTANEO

[*With fire.*] Oh! no, Austrian women *and men as well* take back their word. . . .

GIACOMO

[*With a sigh.*] And who has to bear the brunt — our poor Genoese. Not one moment's peace has been theirs since these Austrians broke into the city. The people certainly are not responsible for this accursed hard lot imposed on them. They were ready to stake their utmost to defend their own. All is your fault, you, oh illustrious senators, you alone are to blame, that the city has been taken from us.

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT II.]

LOMELLINI

You speak, my son, like an illiterate and ignorant boy. Defend, hold the city! Why, it was an utter impossibility, we were unprepared, we had no soldiers nor money.

GIACOMO

[*Insisting.*] Nevertheless the people at least would have attempted resistance. And to our aid at the very time as you know came the inundation of the Polcevera in whose dry bed the Austrians were encamped. It was you who lacked backbone and advised surrendering at once.

CATTANEO

We? We? You are mistaken! We did not so hastily give in, that is proven by the representations exchanged between the Senator, your father, Senator Grimaldi and the enemy's envoy Brown.

LOMELLINI

Ah! From that interview how much bitterness have I carried away! Brown sought but subterfuges to compel us into surrendering Genoa. And when I observed that the Republic of Genoa was not even at war with Austria, he gave for answer nothing less than the Genoese had always been allies of the enemies of the Empress! Just as if that constituted a declaration of war!

ACT II.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

GIACOMO

It is the habit of the Austrians to invert the truth to their advantage.

LOMELLINI

And yet how could we stop the Austrians from entering the city? We had no soldiers . . . no money . . .

GIACOMO

You keep repeating, father, always that same thing: money, money. In the end you had to find money to satisfy the voracity of the Marshal! Two millions of it you have already disgorged.

CATTANEO

True, but only by looting our Bank of San Giorgio.

GIACOMO

It was rather a bad case that! Robbing a bank where not only we Genoese had deposited our money, but foreigners their money too. A great part of that money did not even belong to Genoese! And the Senate had no right to make such use of it. That money was the fruit of our commercial relations grown out of the trust, the credit we had been able to cultivate in other countries, so that that robbing of the Bank of San Giorgio signified the collapse of all our moral work of the

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT II.

past and our reputation of honour, not figuring the material money loss of centuries! The crime of the ages.

LOMELLINI

But what was there to be done? Necessity knows no law.

GIACOMO

The people did not take it that way. The day they carried away from San Giorgio, this most renowned bank of the world, those thirteen big cartloads of sacks, filled with "Genovine" our people crowded in the streets, pensive and ferocious — they appreciated the meaning of the crime. One seemed to be assisting at a funeral, but the cortège of that mass of gold presaged a forerunner of human toll to come.

CATTANEO

True, all Sottoripa was that day black with people menacing and grim as you say, and had those carts not been well guarded, a terrible riot would have occurred there and then, and to suppress it we would have had to deplore many, many dead on our side.

GIACOMO

Why do you say deplore? One does not count one's dead, if the cause be sacred. These seeming dead are as needful as the Spring that

ACT II.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

starts the green sprouting in the meadows. Flowering life comes not into being again be there not those ready to bear the labours of preparing the fields, of scattering the seed. No! Call those not dead who fall stricken in defending their country, in liberating it to renewed life and activities. They form a living chain, eternal, they and the phalanx of martyrs who precede them, who follow them. Ever, forever on they live in what they have recreated.

[The scene is interrupted by the parting of the heavy velvet portières. Maria enters in shadow. She perceives Giacomo and startles; for a moment she is undecided, as if to retire; but Giacomo's look falls on her. At first dim sight of her the transformation of the girl of the lower classes into the lady of the best society and dressed as such so confuses Giacomo that he fails to recognise in her Bianca; but all at once, as a beam of light betrays her, he utters a cry of surprise and delight, unable for the moment to master his feelings. By his side Maria by gesture commands him to silence.]

MARIA

[Advancing resolutely to the group which the three gentlemen form, they bow to her.] The gentlemen are awaiting the Marshal?

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT II.

CATTANEO

Exactly so . . . and with whom have we the honour to speak?

MARIA

I am. . . . [*Pausing, as if she was suppressing the words.*] I am his niece . . . [*more sweetly*] that is, father is his brother . . . a very different man, my father. . . .

LOMELLINI

We know that.

MARIA

Thank you. . . . Oh! no, my father and I do not approve of the Marshal . . . but what is to be done? . . . He, the marshal, is the dominating one; it is he who commands [*in low voice and almost imperceptibly*] up to now . . .

CATTANEO

[*Gallantly kissing her hand.*] I salute the handsome ally!

MARIA

I am Genoese as my father is, and as ought to be also this uncle of mine. Is he not too a Botta-Adorno?

LOMELLINI

[*Ironically.*] He asserts that he has to settle an old account with our Republic of Genoa.

ACT II.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

MARIA

[*With vivacity.*] I know it; he says the Republic put a bounty on his father's head and confiscated all his father's property, but of two things one: either his father was guilty, and the Republic acted very well in the premises . . . or his father was not guilty, and the son has proven himself unworthy of an innocent Genoese patriot. . . .

CATTANEO

[*Laughing.*] Adorable little logician!

LOMELLINI

[*In admiration.*] You have the courage to utter your opinions.

MARIA

Yes . . . always. And then I recognise myself now among friends. . . . You, illustrious Senators, are here. . . .

CATTANEO

We have come to plead mercy for our most unhappy Genoa.

LOMELLINI

It is hard to be placed in a position to have to make the request.

CATTANEO

And it ought not to have to be done; every promise ought to be kept.

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT II.

MARIA

But we are in the hands of barbarians.

GIACOMO

[*Looking at Maria intently.*] It is an historical battle-cry that — “Fuori i barbari!” Out with the barbarians!

MARIA

[*Responding to his look.*] Yes; “Fuori i barbari!”

[*The scene is interrupted again by the parting of the portières. Two footmen in livery hold them aside, as the Marshal enters, accompanied by an orderly-officer. These remain in the back of the room, while the Marshal advances to the group. Seeing Maria, to her in a harsh tone.*]

MARSHAL

And you, Maria, what are you doing here?

MARIA

I did not know there was any one here when I entered this moment.

MARSHAL

Well — but now you must go; come in later to offer us refreshments!

[*Maria with a quick look at Giacomo, who returns it, nods to the Senators and exit.*]

ACT II.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

[The Marshal dismisses the officer and servants. When alone with the three men, he invites them to seat themselves and instals himself with importance in an arm-chair.]

[Silence.]

MARSHAL

[With impatience.] Well?

CATTANEO

Your Excellency will readily guess what has brought us here.

MARSHAL

[With a tone a little mocking.] I know nothing.

CATTANEO

The motive is serious and we have asked the son of Senator Lomellini here *[pointing to Giacomo]* to act as Secretary. The Senate must be minutely informed of all the words which are to be exchanged.

MARSHAL

I have no objection to my words remaining firmly impressed on you; they are immutable and are to become law.

CATTANEO

It would have served well had the words of

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT II.

Mer Majesty the Empress-Queen Maria Theresa too become law.

MARSHAL

[*Always ironically.*] Indeed.

LOMELLINI

But, alas, such is not the case. . . . I call up the facts. Your Excellency cannot deny that the inexpressible torture of the past two weeks, of which Genoa is the victim, has moved the whole civilised world.

GIACOMO

No one can hear the description of what has taken place here without being deeply touched. There are no horrors or violences which the Austrian troops have hesitated to commit. No woman is safe, her honour respected, no citizen secure in his goods and chattels. They want everything, these troops, they usurp everything, they prey on everything.

MARSHAL

Vae Victis — To the Victors belong the spoils — said the Romans. Well, that same device is ours to-day. And we consecrate it as inheritance to all nations who have faith in their might. You are like children, you Senators, to grieve yourselves because we, the victors, carry out our

ACT II.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

right of booty and of aggression over you the conquered. Perhaps such war-practices are something new to you Genoese? Have you not yourselves gloriously carried out your pillages, your rapines, your devastations to the very dregs, in your glorious past?

LOMELLINI

Tempi passati.

MARSHAL

[*Mockingly.*] Autres temps, autres mœurs. True, in times gone, one partook of the relish of conquest instinctively in one gulp without appreciating its voluptuousness. Nowadays one sips of the juice of it, and so drop by drop with understanding exhausts the cup. Yes, war is no child's play, and the war that brings conquest in its train must be an irresistible onslaught of brute force of "Schrecklichkeit." And to the captain who knows how to use such conquering force and the devious ways he knows how to employ it, the better for him.

GIACOMO

You must admit, that in the end such violence and injustice falls back on the conqueror.

MARSHAL

[*Laughing.*] It is possible; but then some-

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT II.

thing has to happen that has not been foreseen; that the conquered becomes the conqueror. [*With wrath.*] To get back to the point. Of what are you Senators complaining? We left you your political rights, and we did you the honour to ask you first for the money we needed, which was ours by right of conquest.

CATTANEO

[*Interrupting with force.*] We cannot give you more money, that is certain . . . already we have given you too much. To satisfy your unjust demands we plundered the Bank of San Giorgio . . . fortunately that crime falls back on you!

MARSHAL

[*Always laughing hoarsely.*] Ah! Ah! Ah!

CATTANEO

But now that crime shall not be repeated, so we have no more money to give you. How, where should we be able to find it, now that all traffic has come to a standstill, all, all gone, lost, the English fleet blockading our harbour, taking possession of all the goods that arrive? Too much; too much we have given you already. Our case is most pitiful, and His Holiness Benedict the XIV ordered his Nuncio at Vienna to obtain

ACT II.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

from Her Majesty the Empress-Queen Maria Theresa a release, or at least an extension, of the payment of the third million you demanded.

MARSHAL

Indeed.

GIACOMO

And as also the Ambassador of the Republic, Giacomo Spinola, had taken a great interest in the matter, Her Majesty had consented.

MARSHAL

Indeed.

LOMELLINI

But now we are told Her Majesty has revoked the signed act, and as if that were not sufficient, your Excellency demanded an addition of a further fifteen thousand Genovine on top of all.

MARSHAL

Very true; we are in great need of money. The cost of up-keep of the army is enormous.

GIACOMO

But Her Majesty has broken her word.

MARSHAL

Ladies, especially in high positions, do not understand much of administration. At first they

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT II.

let themselves be overwhelmed by impressions . . . fortunately a more vigilant council puts matters right again. . . .

CATTANEO

In short, your Excellency is responsible for the revocation of the act and for the exaction of the new payment?

MARSHAL

It is possible.

GIACOMO

Your Excellency assumes a very grave responsibility.

LOMELLINI

The Senate was glad of the condescension of Her Majesty and trusting in her, had taken no measures to meet the payment.

CATTANEO

In any event, it is obviously impossible to pay it.

MARSHAL

There are the private fortunes on which the Senate can fall back. Of noble and rich families Genoa has sufficient. All those magnificent palaces must hide mountains of gold. Besides how the amount is to be gotten together does not concern me. It is sufficient for me that it be paid at

ACT II.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

the stipulated time. [*He gets up and with him the three men.*] You have come representing the Senate: Inform the Senate then of my firm decision that this demand be strictly held to.

CATTANEO

To a physical impossibility no one can be held.

MARSHAL

You are wrong to conceive this impost so exorbitant; there may come others yet which are much heavier.

GIACOMO

Does your Excellency wish to impose on the Republic more atrocious humiliations, to throw it into abject despair?

MARSHAL

[*Looking Giacomo right in the face.*] As long as you ask me, then yes, "I want to leave to Genoa but her eyes, to weep with."

GIACOMO

[*Also looking the Marshal in the face.*] Your Excellency had better have a care! Of too bitter tears rises the redemption.

[*Lomellini, frightened by the arrogant tone of his son, makes a sign for him to be prudent, but the Marshal intervenes with a sarcastic laugh.*]

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT II.

MARSHAL

Let him speak, what else can he do? He is but a young man and youth must gather experience. And this young man will soon learn to see [*emphasises with gesture each word he utters*] that the heel of the enemy crushes all the arrogance of the conquered. [*Changes his tone.*] But now enough of business; I have promised to recall my niece to offer you some refreshments, she is a troublesome little minx with whom one must keep one's word.

[*Rings the bell on the rich damask-covered table, and then to the servant who enters.*] The refreshments, and have my niece, the Illustrissima Signorina Maria, duly informed.

[*The three men on mention of refreshments make signs of negation; but the Marshal will not be denied. Whilst the servants bring in trays and decanters with wine and liquors, he continues.*]

What do the gentlemen fear? [*Smiling.*] That I will poison you? Ah! I certainly need not to resort to such means if I wished to have your Senate vanish and your Senators in the bargain. No, no, partake freely of my refreshments, consider yourselves for the time but prisoners of my niece. [*To Maria who enters.*] Is it not so, Maria, you would never forgive me, if I had not called you back? [*Turning to the others.*]

ACT II.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

My niece is very proud, she does not like to be sent away.

MARIA

[*Has gone to the table where dishes of delicacies and decanters are set.*] You are right, uncle, I would prefer to have others, I know, sent away in preference.

MARSHAL

And now show what fine manners you have been taught in the convent.

[*A silence, whilst Maria goes round with the glasses in her hand. The three men take the glasses without drinking; Giacomo leaves the group and approaches the table, turning his back to the company, so that Maria, now returned to the table, is hidden from the rest.*]

GIACOMO

So it is you! . . . You! . . .

MARIA

Did you not recognise me at once?

GIACOMO

How was that possible? I, I should never have imagined! And you are . . . so different . . . from . . . Bianca. But why, why, at least to me; why have you not told the truth? . . . I would never have betrayed it!

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT II.

MARIA

I was not proud to announce my relationship as [*pointing to the Marshal with a move of her chin*] his niece . . . I am so glad at times to forget it.

GIACOMO

And nobody here knows?

MARIA

They recognise me as a rebel, but not to the extent you know. . . .

[*They continue to speak in a low voice. From the other part of the room one hears the Marshal say:*]

MARSHAL

You are wrong, you Genoese. Abandoned by your allies the French and the English, what could you hope? . . . Unprepared you had nothing to expect but the worst from us.

CATTANEO

Why the worst? We have not been at war with Her Majesty the Empress!

MARSHAL

[*Laughing.*] You are treated worse by an Italian, the King of Sardinia takes from you whole provinces, he . . .

ACT II.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

[Continues to speak, whilst Giacomo talks with Maria in a half tone.]

GIACOMO

And I dared the other night to speak to you as I did . . . in remembrance whereof I blush . . . what pardon can I ask of you?

MARIA

I have nothing to forgive you; you believed me the girl of the people . . . and you spoke to me as one speaks to . . . a girl of that class.

GIACOMO

How could you find the courage to come alone, disguised, at night, to a tavern in Sottoripa, you so young, and of such culture?

MARIA

It was the only way for me to get to my companions and to act with them.

GIACOMO

And if the Marshal had discovered? Did you not think of the risks you were running?

MARIA

[Raising her shoulders with indifference.] I live only for the purpose of pushing *[with a look at the Marshal]* these out; and you I suppose have no other thought?

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT II.

GIACOMO

How can you ask? Did you not often hear me speak with our comrades at the rendezvous?

MARIA

I must hear all. . . . How did it go [*pointing to the uncle*] — I mean your visit here?

GIACOMO

As was to be foreseen . . . bad. . . . He has refused all and any concession.

MARIA

Never mind. It remains to us now to fight for our sacred cause of Genoa . . . and the mission I have undertaken . . . will not fail.

GIACOMO

And you still will not tell me plainly, how you intend to fulfil it? You should tell me now; there might be perils in store for you.

MARIA

Secret missions must remain secret.

[*They continue to speak in a low voice, whilst one hears Cattaneo say:*]

CATTANEO

Your Excellency forgets that the whole population is for us, and so against you. . . .

ACT II.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

MARSHAL

The people? But if you didn't know you wanted them — didn't know how to make use of them?

LOMELLINI

But we still have arms; we still have our cannons!

MARSHAL

Cannons? [*With a malicious laugh.*] But if all that belongs to us now!

[*They continue to speak, whilst one hears the voice of Giacomo, who speaks always in low voice.*]

GIACOMO

You were surprised by the entrance of the Austrians into the convent?

MARIA

Yes; it was terrible. My father was away. As soon as we knew of their entering Genoa we attempted to escape. But it was already too late. The soldiers had by then half besieged us. The poor nuns begged for mercy; you understand they were responsible for all of us. And before we realised we were at the mercy of the invaders. They would have broken into the convent, but the intervention of my uncle made it possible for my father to enter the convent and take me away with

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT II.

him, and one by one the other fathers came to save their daughters from the ruffians.

GIACOMO

[*Raging.*] Well said . . . ruffians . . . ay! if I had been there!

MARIA

You, and what could you have done? Then like now it was necessary to be many to save ourselves. At the price of many only Genoa will once more be free. With this in mind I have, with trembling heart joined the small group of liberators at the tavern of Sottoripa. Ah! no, we Genoese were not created to be oppressed. In ourselves, in our people only shall we find the force . . . to liberate ourselves of the heavy yoke of to-day.

GIACOMO

May it be granted us.

MARIA

You say that, and yet you tremble when you see me decided to go on with the mission I have assumed.

GIACOMO

I know, but are you not too overdaring . . . perhaps imprudent?

ACT II.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

MARIA

Imprudent? I shall know how to take the necessary precautions not to be taken by surprise.

GIACOMO

We are surrounded by perils and perhaps there might be other ways for you to arrive at your aim.

MARIA

I do not see any other.

GIACOMO

Why don't you try to reach your ends through your uncle? If you succeeded with him where we have failed, the greatest good would result, it would be a step towards our goal.

MARIA

What nonsense! How can I hope to succeed here where the Senators have failed?

GIACOMO

At all events you might try.

MARIA

The consent of my uncle would not change anything at all. In the humour in which these Austrians are, the game would but be postponed perhaps only for a while, then all at once we should find ourselves totally overwhelmed.

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT II.

GIACOMO

Let us leave it to the fates to decide. If your uncle repeats to you his "no" it is then that events will be precipitated . . . and I shall accept that with more resignation, because you . . . so generously are confronting it. Let it be settled this way and so make me happy [*looking at her tenderly*] with the proof that you have pardoned me. . . .

MARIA

[*Not convinced, but won by his tenderness.*]
Well, let it be so, just to please you.

GIACOMO

[*Passionately.*] Ah! then you do wish to please me?

MARIA

[*Putting charmingly a finger to her lips.*]
Sssttt . . .

LOMELLINI

Well, my son, we must go.

CATTANEO

[*With a sigh of relief.*] Yes, we must go.

MARSHAL

[*In his ironical way.*] I have no excuse further to keep you.

ACT II.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

[*Salutes — bows — the three men kiss Maria's hand — then exeunt.*]

[*When they have gone, the Marshal, who had made a step towards the door as if he were leaving with them, comes to front of stage where Maria remains deep in thought.*]

MARSHAL

[*Rubbing his hands.*] They left as they came. They have wasted their time [*watching his niece, with a smirk*], except one, eh! It seems to me you took a fancy to the fine young man, eh? You understood yourselves well. It is not surprising, he is a rebel and you too. And beyond statecraft — love.

MARIA

We did not speak of love.

MARSHAL

No? Of what then did you speak with so much fire?

MARIA

He told me that you refused your consent to what they had come to ask of you. It would have been only right to grant what you had before promised . . . uncle, why were you so vexatious?

MARSHAL

Probably I had my reasons.

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT II.

MARIA

But, uncle, one must keep one's promises [*with charm*] in the convent we have been taught so.

MARSHAL

Those are lessons good for boarding-school girls — They won't serve for Statesmen and for Warriors.

MARIA

[*Always with grace.*] You say that . . .

MARSHAL

Yes, *I* say it, many others will say it and will stand by the consequences.

MARIA

War is a horrible thing; we should try not to augment its horrors.

MARSHAL

War has its good side; it is the expression of force and energy, it develops the best qualities of man.

MARIA

Of man? Also when a pack of drunken soldiers beset a convent?

MARSHAL

[*Carelessly.*] That was but a digression.

ACT II.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

MARIA

But a digression of which your niece might have become a victim.

MARSHAL

[*With indifference.*] I am sorry . . .

MARIA

It should really and truly matter to you, because in that episode I learnt many things of which before . . . I was totally ignorant. You are responsible, if I have learnt too much.

MARSHAL

I?

MARIA

Yes, you . . . when these awful soldiers wanted to enter the convent, when I saw the nuns terrified not alone for themselves but still more for us, over whom they had assumed responsibility, when I understood that they were trembling not only for fear of material injury or out of fear of death . . . but for fear of an injury to come to them a thousand times worse than death . . . well then I understood things which never, oh, never before had crossed my mind . . . and for all this it is you I blame. . . . You, with your calousness, your disregard of the laws of nations . . .

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT II.

MARSHAL

[*Ironically.*] What had I to do with it? It was not I who besieged the convent.

MARIA

But you were the captain of them, the supreme commander of that rabble. It was you who gave them free rein to do as they chose in Genoa. Genoa which is your native town, and you a Botta-Adorno!

MARSHAL

I had to obey the orders of my imperial Mistress!

MARIA

Your Mistress! An Austrian!

MARSHAL

I had to avenge the offence the Republic did my father.

MARIA

My father who, though he had the same father as you yourself, does not agree with you. He is a Genoese heart and soul.

MARSHAL

How can I help it, if your father has no blood in his veins?

ACT II.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

MARIA

Notwithstanding history will judge you most severely.

MARSHAL

It will not be you, rebellious little judge, who will write history, and I have a thousand justifications.

MARIA

Such justifications would not leave me a moment of peace, if I were in your place.

MARSHAL

Conscience of a boarding-school girl!

MARIA

It may be; but still let yourself be moved by this conscience of a boarding-school girl; throw off that hateful uniform of yours! Uncle mine, return to us! Return to Genoa!

MARSHAL

You are crazy!

MARIA

Throw it off, oh, throw off that hateful garb. Do not contaminate this city longer with foreign domination, this our soil refulgent in old-time glory, rich in tradition, energies and activities. Throw your disguise off, oh, throw it off, before it is too late!

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT II.

MARSHAL

[*Laughing.*] What? Threatenings now!

MARIA

[*Serious.*] You have no conception of the sufferings of our entire people obliged to live among bumbailiffs, longing so impatiently for liberty, for the liberation of every foreign moral and material bond, trembling impatiently for their inalienable right once more to cry out "the soil, the beautiful soil which God has given us is ours, ours to the last boundary"; oh, no, no, you have no conception of what this all means to them.

MARSHAL

I shall have to be enlightened by you!

MARIA

Don't be blind for the sake of your impetuous love of vengeance. Do grant, do pardon at least what you owe as a duty of justice.

MARSHAL

[*Sarcastically.*] Now you become legislator, too.

MARIA

[*Emphatically.*] You do not behave well in breaking your pledge in imposing these unfair taxes, of taxes far beyond possibility of payment.

ACT II.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

Release the Genoese of part of these or extend their time of payment, if you can do nothing else.

MARSHAL

[*Resolutely and harshly.*] NO!

MARIA

[*Ironically.*] Of course, how could such as you answer differently, you who are perjured in donning colours which are not yours, you who are . . .

MARSHAL

[*Interrupting with rage.*] That adorer of yours has not made a happy choice in you for advocate of his cause. Your words now only urge me to harder oppression of your dear Genoa. You are a very silly childish woman, you who dare to lecture me on matters of state, you my niece who instead of rendering me the natural respect and affection you owe me dare to provoke me.

MARIA

[*Changing her tone.*] Oh! Uncle, if any gentle or sweet words of mine could persuade you to be more lenient to our unhappy city, I could not find enough of them . . . if my affection and respect would induce you to appease your wrath towards our Genoa I should hurry to kneel at

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT II.

your feet. [*Makes an attempt to kneel at the feet of the Marshal.*]

MARSHAL

[*By a gesture making her rise before she has been able to recline herself.*] I have no need of your respect and even less of your affection; I do not occupy myself with you; if I attached any importance to your words I should grind you into impotence. Insolent and pathetic as they are, your words are but source of mirth to me. I did not wait on your advice to judge my conduct or to modify it. [*Laughing irefully.*] Oh! oh! At my age I am not to be led by the nose by such as you. At your age, you to give yourself such airs — you who should still be in a convent — it is too laughable. If I have one thing to regret it is this war has turned you out of your seclusion.

MARIA

In that you may be saying the truth and *really* regret it. . . .

MARSHAL

[*Laughing hoarsely.*] Ay! . . . Ay! . . . Again a change of tone. . . . And still more obscure menaces. . . . Perchance, you have made yourself a conspirator with that pale admirer of yours, who too assumes an air as if he held the fate of the city in the palm of his hand. . . . Splendid,

ACT II.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

splendid, go ahead, children. . . . As a man of arms my advice to you is to keep your powder dry . . . that is, if you will not lack cannons for the powder.

[Exit, sneering and repeating the last words.]

MARIA

[Stamping her feet, her fists clenched in wrath and vengeance.]

AS TO THAT, WAIT AND SEE!

CURTAIN

THIRD ACT

In the Ducal Palace. The Doge, very old, is seated on the throne. The Senators in arm-chairs circle about him. In the centre a table, where two secretaries are seated. On the table are the crown and the Symbols of the ducal dignity. An urn for voting purposes and writing utensils.

THE DOGE

It is with greatest sorrow I find myself obliged, O magnificent Senators, to submit to you always more ill tidings. It would seem that fate, besides bearing down so heavily on our unfortunate city, presses down especially hard on me, her unworthy chief. [*A whisper in the assembly which the Doge bids to silence with a gesture of his hand.*] Alas! unworthy am I truly, since I have not been able to avert from the beloved ramparts of our city the terrible calamities which assail it. I know, I know, what you magnificent Senators have for answer; that it was not in my power, as 'twas not in yours. But was death itself not to be preferred perhaps, yes, death, which because of my

ACT III.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

advanced age is already close at hand, to the indignity to my name, hitherto chaste, a slur the severe verdict of History will now fasten upon it? Have I perhaps not sinned in my hour of weakness in signing that fatal deed of capitulation of mine city? And yet what else was there for me to do? We had tried everything else, not so? The magnificent Senator Grimaldi knows it [*points to the Senator, who bends his head in sign of affirmation*]; the Magnificent Senator Agostini Lomellini knows [*bending head as above*], you who had been sent to Field-Marshal Botta-Adorno to try to obtain more humane conditions. In vain, he could not be moved a jot and further insisted that the keys of the city and the arms of our citizens be consigned over to him instantly. True, to such extreme terms the people rose in fury and would there and then have taken up arms to prevent the Austrians entering the town; but how could we encourage such an insurrection? With but few soldiers and minus money, the city could surely not have defended itself efficaciously nor held out for any length of time, whilst such resistance would only have made the enemy more ferocious, once they had victoriously entered the city. That the enemy is brutal and without a sense of pity is again evidenced by what to-day I have to submit to you. Therefore I have assembled you.

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT III.

[A silence as if the old man felt himself overwhelmed by the duty imposed upon him. Then he proceeds.]

And yet we believed that the measure was full, we thought to have wept all our tears of blood in signing that capitulation and making booty of the money of San Giorgio to pay the millions demanded by Marshal Botta-Adorno. . . . Alas no, there remain other blood-tears to be shed! A new and much greater menace is awaiting us. These despicable Austrians now lay claim to our cannon, to transport them from Genoa, so that they may serve that expedition into Provence directed by the English and by the King of Sardinia against the French. And in two days our cannon will set forth from the Lanterna to be borne away never to return.

[The Senators in a chorus:]

"Impossible." "We shall never allow that!"
"It shall never be said!" . . .

DOGE

And yet . . . how prevent such a crime?
The Austrians have the force behind them.

CENTURIONE

We must try everything rather than submit to such an incalculable damage.

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DOGE

Magnificent Senator Centurione, I can think of no remedy for it.

D'ORIA

I propose to try again to persuade the Marshal.

DOGE

The demand of the Austrians, Magnificent Senator D'Oria, is made in such peremptory manner that it admits of no reply. And besides, we have already seen what little avail the negotiations with the Marshal are . . . and in Vienna. . . . Even Benedict XIV has been made a fool of.

FIESCHI

That was a question of money . . . money goes and comes . . . and we shall see our Genovine come back again. But here it is question of the city's most sacred defences, our autonomy.

IMPERIALI

Add, Magnificent Senator Fieschi, that our dangers grow more complex because of the help the King of Sardinia lends the Austrians. This fellow has need of our cannon to serve them against us, and so favour our enemy the Austrians.

PALLAVICINI

[*With wrath.*] I agree, I agree, Magnificent Senator Imperiali, it is horrible, it is horrible.

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT III.

D'ORIA

The King of Sardinia, Magnificent Senator Pallavicini, does but continue his work and bring it to fulfilment. . . . Has he perhaps not already entered in Savona, valiantly though vainly defended by Agostino Adorno? Did he not go as far as Ventimiglia? His ambition is on a par with the fortune of his arms.

DEFORNARI

Certainly Senator D'Oria is right, the King of Sardinia by approaching Austria has become an implacable enemy of ours . . . and yet . . .

IMPERIALI

And yet . . . Magnificent Senator Defornari. . . .

DEFORNARI

'And yet our greatest enemy remains always the Austrian. I see in the king of Sardinia the successor of these brave Savoians, so shrewd in extending their land and rewinning it for Italian soil; always ready and skilful to snatch away from the foreigner as much Italian soil as they can. Certainly, it is a great damage to us that Charles Emanuel the Third is allied against us, and with the Austrians, that he prods them on to taking away our country, but I am convinced that the al-

ACT III.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

liance of these two is but temporary. Their work means but a transitory halt to the natural development of the territory involved. The soil that Charles Emanuel to-day snatches away from us he will keep for himself, and it will at least so fall under the dominion of an Italian. He is a prince of our blood, and it is he who possesses himself of the land, not the foreigner.

GAVOTTI

[*Sadly.*] He or another, what does it matter in so far that the land no longer belongs to us, whose fair possessions in times gone by dotted the seas of Marmora, the Black, the Adriatic, the Mediterranean.

DEFORNARI

Only too true, Magnificent Senator Gavotti. But there are historical necessities to which we have to yield and understand their indisputable grandeur. Nobody more than I weeps over soil fallen under the Signoria of a Savoian; but this does not prevent me to foresee, how, little by little, in centuries to come the fate of Genoese possessions will be the fate of all Italy. Under the domination of the Savoians, made stronger by their successes and their cleverness in seizing the lucky moment and in dominating it, in their action I can conceive how all the states, all the Italian Repub-

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT III.

lics can fall into the supreme power of one king,
King no more of Sardinia, but of all Italy!

CENTURIONE

[*Somewhat ironically.*] How interesting!

DEFORNARI

It is fate itself. We Genoese like the Venetians have the wide expanse of the sea, which extends our dominions and our commerce. But the King of Sardinia closed up as he is between the Alps and the Italian provinces and always at the mercy of the foreigner is forced to extend his territories in Italy itself, if he is to hold off his oppressors. And he succeeds, because he accomplishes his mission which is to obtain the natural boundaries of his state and to leave them, out of reach of others and fortified, to his successors. Such is the possibility of the chief of a state ruled by a Dynasty, not limited as is the government of a Republic by parties and factions, which as the Republic grows weak contest each other's power. And I see clearly how the descendants of such a monarchical Savoian House can well make use of such power incessantly, fixedly, until they have constituted a unique and indissoluble greater Italy. And our outcry "Fuori i barbari," hitherto so sorrowful and barren, will be echoed and re-echoed by the

ACT III.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

whole of Italy roaringly and triumphantly!
"Fuori i barbari!"

[*Keeps silent, absorbed by his vision, and the other Senators respect his silence.*]

CATTANEO

[*Interrupting the silence and with slight irony.*]
Still to-day to make way for the future magnificence of the Dynasty of the Savoian would signify to us not only to work for its grandeur, but also for the grandeur of the Austrians.

DOGE

[*With pain.*] My heart's desire, Magnificent Senator Cattaneo, is that we were so strong as not to be obliged to cede to anybody a jot, no, not even a stone of our soil. I should wish we were strong enough to crush out whatever servitude the enemy imposes upon us . . . and which alas becomes daily ever more crushing. What is to be done?

FIESCHI

For one thing, we cannot, we must not allow them to take away from us our cannon. We all, every one of us in the depth of his heart cherishes the dream of the eventual liberation of our city, but without the cannon, however can such a consummation be accomplished?

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT III.

LOMELLINI

Not to mention the ignominy, Magnificent Senator Fieschi, of such spoliation.

D'ORIA

The people would with right ask us to justify why we had allowed such.

PALLAVICINI

The magnificent Senator D'Oria says rightly, there is but the hope left, that the people itself, tired of its misplaced faith in us shall rise as one man in eager defence of the vaunted cannon of their native city.

CATTANEO

The populace rages. It asks but a pretext to rise, and you, magnificent Senator Pallavicini, you know that truly.

FIESCHI

And how do you know it, Magnificent Senator Cattaneo?

PALLAVICINI

Because Senator Cattaneo and I are wont to ramble about the city day, and especially night, for the sole purpose of sounding the true feelings of the inhabitants. . . . In this way we discovered that in Sottoripa there exists a tavern . . .

ACT III.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

where for some weeks past, spirited meetings in favour of a popular insurrection are held.

LOMELLINI

And of this important item you did not think it pertinent to inform us, the Government?

CATTANEO

To what purpose? The Government assuredly would not have been opposed.

DOGE

Certainly not. It has been our special wish, our desire, that in all public places, in the banks, the coffee and wine-shops, everywhere there should be discussed the terrible prevailing conditions of the Republic, fermenting in this way the popular hatred against our oppressors.

PALLAVICINI

But to make known to you, even with caution, the news of these meetings was to run the risk of having it reach the ears of the Austrians.

D'ORIA

Are the plotters many?

CATTANEO

Not many, Magnificent Senator D'Oria. There may be seven or eight of the people. But de-

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT III.

cided and resolute they are, absolutely determined on the liberation of the city. Sure it is, they can toll the hour of the starting of uprising.

FIESCHI

It remains to be seen whether they will succeed in securing additions to their numbers.

CENTURIONE

Evidently here is much to be thought over; but in the movement there is hope; a ray of light cast on our gloomy state. Rest assured that ardent group of patriots will leave no stone unturned to prevent our cannon being dragged away.

DOGE

The most Holy Virgin Mary, protectress of our city, has well inspired our decision that nothing of the terrible outrages of the Austrians shall be kept away from the people. In the violation of the most vital and sacred interests of its city the people in itself must find unswerving strength to defend and to avenge itself.

D'ORIA

[*With strength.*] Verily, in the people rests our sole hope, our only salvation.

[*An usher enters and with a low bow to the Doge he makes sign to be allowed to speak.*]

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DOGE

Dite.

USHER

There is a woman, a woman of the people, who peremptorily insists in having audience of your Serenissime.

DOGE

A woman? But no woman is admitted to speak to me during the Council.

USHER

The guards below tried to stop her, but she was not to be denied and fought her way on. The guards rather than have a crowd attracted in the street by her wilful actions let her come up. We have opposed our energetic refusal to introduce her here to your Serenissime. But she will not relent and threatens momentarily to raise her voice and bring about an uproar. For the dignity of your Serenissime and of the Assembly, I have taken leave to enter here and expose the case to your Serenissime.

DOGE

And what says she?

USHER

That she is in urgent need to submit to your Serenissime most important information.

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT III.

DOGE

But we are in Council; if she wants to speak to me, why asks she not for private audience?

USHER

I so observed to her. She answered, however, that what she has to say concerns not private affairs, but is of public interest. And she urges . . . urges . . . without end.

DOGE

And you say, she is a woman of the lower classes?

USHER

She speaks in dialect and willingly would make use of her fists, if we refuse her entrance.

PALLAVICINI

It is not unlikely she be a messenger of the group of the inn of Sottoripa.

CATTANEO

It is possible . . . it is possible . . . anything is possible in the times we are living, not unlikely and perhaps providential this.

LOMELLINI

We cannot afford to turn away any assistance, not even on a chance.

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DOGE

In short, it seems to me, that you, Magnificent Senators, agree to have her come in?

THE SENATORS IN CHORUS

We do.

DOGE

Only it is not permitted to set aside the Rules of Council. If we must receive her, this woman of the people, so be it, but I propose that the sitting first be dissolved. Its statutes thus will not be violated . . . and we may at the same time gain useful information, if this woman really comes from the people. . . . The Magnificent Senators approve?

SENATORS IN CHORUS

We approve.

DOGE

[*To the secretaries.*] The sitting is adjourned.

[*The secretaries rise, gather their papers, and after a profound bow to the Doge, retire.*]

DOGE

[*To Usher.*] Have her come in.

[*Usher exits; a little while after he introduces Bianca; she is dressed as in first act as a woman of the lower classes and affects the manners of such.*]

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT III.

She feigns to be embarrassed. The Senators at her appearing look at her, full of curiosity, and some of them abandon their arm-chairs and approach her. The Doge remains on his throne. . . . Bianca, after having made an awkward bow to the Doge, remains silent.]

DOGE

So you desired to speak to me; what is it you have to tell me?

BIANCA

[In low voice feigning to be embarrassed.] I have a favour to ask of your Serenissime.

DOGE

A favour? Could you not have asked it from me without coming here?

BIANCA

There was no time to lose and it is not a question of a private affair, it is a matter which interests us all. . . .

CENTURIONE

Who . . . all?

BIANCA

We all Genoese; it is surely a question that touches Genoa, our Genoa.

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DOGE

Well, speak! . . .

BIANCA

That is sooner said than done. [*Pause.*]
Well — well — We cannot live any longer in the way we are living; it is a shame, an insupportable horror. All the people are rebelling against the conditions.

[*All the senators interested, approaching nearer the woman.*]

DOGE

[*Keenly looking at Bianca.*] Who says so?

BIANCA

[*To the Doge.*] I say it, and with me everybody says it, and especially my friends, who send me here.

CATTANEO AND PALLAVICINI

[*Looking at each other.*] Ah!

DOGE

Your friends? Which friends?

BIANCA

We are a group of seven or eight leaders. As great as our desire is to dislodge these hated Austrians, what can we do separately each of us alone?

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT III.

Therefore we are united, and we have sworn mortal enmity to the Austrians and are determined to send them away at any sacrifice, at cost even of our lives!

DOGE

[*With much dignity.*] We all think like you, my child.

BIANCA

That's well; thus you will assist me, and I shall bring good news of your assistance to my friends.

DOGE

You must explain yourself better, my dear girl; calm yourself and explain with greater clearness.

BIANCA

You will pardon me. I am but a woman of the people. I do not know how to speak well, but I think that in moments like these, all of us, almost without speaking, must understand each other.

D'ORIA

Truly! You say well.

BIANCA

A few words will suffice. [*Lowering her voice after looking around rapidly.*] Our small group of friends which assembles in an inn of Sotoripa . . .

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[*Pallavicini and Cattaneo contemporarily and approaching still nearer Bianca.*] Ah!

BIANCA

[*Continuing.*] . . . almost every evening, have thought the best way to drive out these Austrians, was to multiply in number, so from few to become many, making propaganda among our own friends begging them to do in their turn the same with theirs, so now we have truly risen to many, many who think in the same way and do but await the opportunity to attack the Austrians and force them out once for all. . . .

CENTURIONE

Certainly there will never be want of opportunities.

BIANCA

Certainly not. Two evenings ago we decided not to lose any more time, the unpleasant affair of San Giorgio had over-exasperated us.

DOGE

[*Thoughtless.*] Oh, there are still other things in store.

BIANCA

[*Lively*] Other things? And what still?

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT III.

DOGE

[*Who remembers that he cannot speak of what has been discussed in Council.*] Sufficient motive in what you already know, dear child, quite enough!

D'ORIA

And now then what have you decided in your assembly?

BIANCA

We want to move, to act, to provoke as soon as possible an insurrection . . . more arms we shall endeavour to get. [*Lowering her voice.*] Some we have already stored away in deep cellars.

FIESCHI

And if the Austrians should happen to find them?

BIANCA

From those cellars no Austrian will ever come up alive. We are decided to be rid of them!

LOMELLINI

Noble people.

BIANCA

We hate them, honourable Senator, we hate them, and when the people hate, you know. . . . But it is not enough alone to know how to die for

ACT III.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

a sacred cause, it is necessary also to know, how to win . . . and of this we are not so confident. . . .

DEFORNARI

If you are so many . . .

BIANCA

We are many, it is true, but also so are the Austrians many, and our centre from which the orders will issue, does not wish to bring about a slaughter of Genoese without its result achieved!

DOGE

If all is so undecided, I do not see, in what way our help can be useful to you. . . .

BIANCA

Oh! Serenissime, in this, we are undecided whether the Senate is favourable to our movement . . . if it is against us, then all our efforts are in vain . . . the Austrians at our first move will answer by annihilating us . . . if the Senate is not with us, well, then all is lost. If on the contrary, it is with us we can feel that at the right moment it will intervene, and we shall now struggle on and hold out with great resistance until all the others will have time to join; I mean to say, every Genoese, all the citizens . . . all . . . all. . . .

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT III.

DOGE

Well, now you know, understand, we are with you . . . and not . . .

BIANCA

I know that, for who could be Genoese and not be with us . . . but this is not sufficient to us.

DOGE

I do not understand. . . .

BIANCA

I mean . . . I require something substantial, something, say in writing — some sign — something to show to my friends . . . to prove to them without a trace of doubt that the Senate is with us. . . . Ours is a grave responsibility; and we want to be quite sure that we do not lead our fellow-men into slaughter . . . words are good enough . . . very good . . . but not sufficient . . . they are but words. . . .

DOGE

However, you will have to be contented with them. We cannot do more.

BIANCA

But I cannot be contented with them. What proof have I to bring to my friends and they to

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the others, that the Senate is with us? We have too much at stake to march without a secure guarantee. No, no, we need clear evidence of the adherence of the Senate, otherwise it is a crime for us to move.

DOGE

[*Whilst the Senators anxiously follow the dialogue.*] Hear, my child. It is difficult to answer you clearly, though you seem to be a very clever girl for one of the popular classes. However, I shall try to make myself understood. Well, the Senate is bound by the act of Capitulation to respect the domination of the Austrians. Our clearly and directly agreeing to an insurrection here would be a transgression of the signed conditions. Therefore we cannot give you any written proof of our approbation which, however, you can rely on. You may trust us. Your scheme once well set on foot we shall intervene. Rely on that.

BIANCA

[*Tossing her head.*] You did not understand me well. It does not regard me personally, I am here alone to listen to your beautiful words. It is on account of the others, who sent me. The difficulties for me, a woman, to have a hearing from you, are so great, that none of my friends

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT III.

will ever credit my having overcome them. How can it be expected, that under these conditions my word should suffice to assure my companions that I obtained your agreement? They will never believe me. I need a more evident proof, that I fulfilled this mission entrusted to me.

FIESCHI

[*A little ironically.*] Your friends' mistrust could be ours too. You ask of us an evident sign of our promise, but, who confirms us that you really are part of the group you speak of, and that these pretended meetings in an inn of Sotoripa really take place? [*Cattaneo and Palavicini make a rapid move as if they desired to speak, but Fieschi, by a look, stops them, and continues.*] For instance, you did not even tell us your name!

BIANCA

[*With confidence.*] Bianca Marsano. But my name is of no importance. I am nobody, but with us there is another, whose name may be more valuable to you, and he can confirm the seriousness of our plan: that is Giacomo Lomellini!

AGOSTINI LOMELLINI

My son?

ACT III.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

BIANCA

Yes. He belongs to our group, he is one of the most esteemed and most fervent members.

LOMELLINI

But why did he not come himself?

BIANCA

Our band is for the most part composed of folk of the people. You, honourable Senators, could have doubted perhaps that he belongs to us, that we should have admitted him. But, [*joining her hands as in act of prayer*] honourable Senators, you do not understand, that out of doubts and doubt, out of suspicions and suspicion you arrive at total inaction, whilst time urges action. Do you not feel that in my words there is a fever burning, that should prove, that I am telling you the truth, and that I ask for assistance in all sincerity? Cannot you understand that every instant counts, that time is precious, and that you must not say NO to my demand under pain of inflicting a very great wrong on the city?

DOGE

My child, every determination of ours is grave just for that. If the movement should not succeed, we shall then have inflicted a wrong, a far greater wrong, on our poor Genoa.

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT III.

BIANCA

Well, let us see, what proof you could hand me for my friends which, without compromising you too gravely, would content my companions.

[A deep silence; in which all meditate, how to solve the problem.]

BIANCA

[At last, with a little cry of triumph.] I have it! *[Turning to Lomellini.]* You, honourable Senator, write one word only: "Consent," and not even your signature. Your son Giacomo knows your handwriting, and he will guarantee for it with our friends, that the written word is authentic. Besides, the paper on it will bear the seal of the Senate. For my part, I promise to destroy the sheet as soon as my companions have read it. Will that do?

[A short silence, in which the Doge consults with his eyes the senators.]

DOGE

What do the Magnificent Senators say to this?

D'ORIA

I think that the medium is an ingenious one and presents for the Senate little or no danger. After all, the moment we pass through is so critical, that perhaps it would be criminal not to ac-

ACT III.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

cept this lass's intervention as some providential succour. We said here but shortly since, that we could not hope for the liberation of Genoa other than through the people's aid. Welcome be its aid then, to which we cannot deny ours. And how can we decline it knowing what tragical menace hourly awaits Genoa? The compromise of the signed capitulation binds us no longer. The Austrians now ask from us a great deal more than has been granted by us in that act. They create a new condition, which we must answer in kind. We are therefore free to act as we please, and I consider we are acting here with utmost prudence.

THE SENATORS

[*Murmuring approbation.*] Bravo . . .
Bravo!!

DOGE

I am happy to submit to the concord and favourable judgment of the Magnificent Senator's judgment, which is also mine. [*Turning to Lomellini.*] I authorise you then to write the word suggested by the Marsano.

LOMELLINI

[*Going to the table to write.*] So be it.
[*Sits himself at the table and writes, seals the*

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT III.

document with the State's Seal, then hands the paper to Bianca, who is beaming with joy.]

BIANCA

[*Taking it.*] That God may help us!

DOGE

[*Approving her words with a sign of the head.*]
Now you may go, my child.

[*Bianca makes a profound bow to the Doge and exits.*]

[*After she has gone a long silence follows. Then the Doge moves slowly and with difficulty from the throne, whilst the senators open a way for him.*]

DOGE

I think we have done nothing reprobable. At all events as that woman of the people says: Now may God help us!

CURTAIN

FOURTH ACT

Scene same as first act.

Giacomo, who has just entered the half-darkened inn, looks around, and not seeing anybody goes towards the little door of the back-shop to call Baciccia.

At this moment enter Bianca closing in a hurry the door behind her. Giacomo on hearing the squeak of the door turns round and seeing Bianca goes towards her. Bianca is dressed as in the first act as a girl of the people.

Bianca has not moved from the door, which she has again slightly opened and is watching cautiously what is happening in the street.

GIACOMO

[*Touching her shoulder slightly.*] What are you doing? What is happening?

BIANCA

[*Does not answer immediately, being too much absorbed in watching. At last shutting the door she turns to Giacomo.*] This time I am sure I have been followed.

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT IV.

GIACOMO

Everything is possible, but by whom?

BIANCA

By an Austrian officer. Two evenings ago, you remember it seemed to me I was followed, but then the wretch disappeared. Not so this evening, and I could do nothing to make him lose my track.

GIACOMO

But who is he? What does he look like?

BIANCA

But I have told you already — he is an Austrian officer, and I cannot quite make out, whether he follows me for political reasons or for . . . something else.

GIACOMO

[*Irate.*] Dog! . . . You see, you see, to what you expose yourself. Now that I am aware who you are . . . Bianca . . . I really don't know, whether it is right to allow you, a woman, to continue in such a dangerous rôle.

BIANCA

One thing is certain, if we are to succeed in our purpose, we must be exposed to some risk. After all if it is question only of myself . . . if it is only I who am in danger, be I only a woman

ACT IV.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

I will know how to defend myself [*takes out a pistol*] you see, it is he or I — alive he would never get me. . . .

GIACOMO

[*Alarmed.*] If you think so to reassure me . . .

BIANCA

It would be much worse, if the Austrian should want to discover our assemblies here, having had a hint from somebody . . . but I suppose in that case he would act more discreetly. Besides, we are at the end of our work — events urge. . . .

GIACOMO

I know it.

BIANCA

I have one satisfaction, the mission I assumed I have fulfilled. [*Shows him the paper from the Senate.*] Here is the adhesion of the Senate to our movement for liberation.

GIACOMO

But in what way, how on earth have you obtained it?

BIANCA

[*Smiling.*] In the most simple way and without running any risk. I went to the Palace of the Duke and I stirred up such a hubbub that I

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT IV.

succeeded in forcing my way into the Council. Because of my costume they believed me to be a woman of the people associated with a group of patriots conspiring for the liberation of Genoa, and at last they surrendered to my insistent prayer. . . .

GIACOMO

[*Looking at her as in a dream, with astonishment.*] And are they with us, with the people?

BIANCA

Not openly, but I believe, that at the right moment we can reckon on them. I asked for a written proof, they did not want to give it because, of course, they do not want to compromise themselves, but then we found a way out, which I hope will satisfy everybody.

GIACOMO

You have done wonderfully, you are wonderful. [*Is looking at the envelope which Bianca gives him.*] Indeed, it is really the Seal of the Senate.

BIANCA

So you recognise it?

GIACOMO

I should say so!

ACT IV.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

BIANCA

Will you not open the paper?

GIACOMO

I think it better that the others too should be given a chance to recognise the unbroken seal.

BIANCA

You are right. [*Seats herself.*]

GIACOMO

Of course, my father was there too?

BIANCA

Of course — it is he who wrote the word which counts; to get it, I had to content myself, that it should not be signed, but you will be able to authenticate the handwriting to the others, if needful, but I hardly believe it will become necessary any longer to show this hard-gotten document. It may be of no importance whatever any more, now since the enemy has in mind this new deviltry of bearing away our cannon.

GIACOMO

I know their scheme, but they won't succeed.

BIANCA

I heard the news after leaving the Council. The Senators must already have known it, other-

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT IV.

wise they would not have yielded to my urgent persisting. Through us they arrive at their last and only way of salvation.

GIACOMO

True. Relief can come only — by will of the people.

BIANCA

It is probably how they reasoned at the Senate; they have done their all to help us, and now we must do the rest of the work. We must never let our cannon be dragged away.

GIACOMO

I repeat; they will not take them away; wildest indignation is general; the people are all aflame, they will fight to the last man rather than give in to that.

BIANCA

I think as you do. I looked in at all the inns; but this time not to add adherents to the cause, there was no need of it. They were saying that a cannon will cross the Via Portoria to-morrow after sun-set to be taken out of town afterwards by the gate of the Lanterna. And it is agreed, everybody will meet in Portoria. We all, every one of us, will be there. Probably we have some ill moments ahead, but the Austrians will pass worse ones still.

ACT IV.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

GIACOMO

[*Alarmed.*] It is useless for you to come to Portoria. We shall already be in large number . . . and you are a woman. . . . Don't you realise now to what a woman is exposed, who goes around alone in the streets?

BIANCA

I have already given you my answer on that score.

GIACOMO

But your presence there will be really harmful, if anything, you will be a hindrance to us. To guard, perhaps to save you, we shall be obliged to neglect other duties that have to be done.

BIANCA

[*Red with indignation.*] I should not be there? I? I? I should have incited you all from the beginning to meet the most serious dangers for our Genoa, and then should quietly stay at home, away from all dangers myself? Oh, Giacomo, is that what you think of me, and you dare encourage me to such cowardice?

GIACOMO

I repeat; what use can your presence down there be?

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT IV.

BIANCA

Chi lo sa? Somebody at the last moment may lack initiative, or audacity and then, I swear it to you, it will be I who will stir things up. Besides, Giacomo, would you wish perhaps to deprive me of the most beautiful spectacle of my life — that of seeing these Austrians driven out of our city?

GIACOMO

You are not alone in the world, think — think of your father!

BIANCA

My father whatever happens, would be the first to approve, he, just like I, we hate the Austrians. But even should he not approve, what then? You see, Giacomo, I have often thought of late of that little verse of the Gospel: "Thou shalt leave thy mother and thy father to follow Me." And it has seemed to me to apply to our duty towards our Country. All our affections must be centred in her and we must think only of her; only to be at her service.

GIACOMO

This seals my lips; how now can I entreat you to listen to my prayer . . . and yet I have a right to say it . . . now that I know that nothing divides us — I have courage now to tell you

ACT IV.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

that my name, my life, everything mine, is yours
. . . yours . . . [*taking the girl passionately in
his arms*] yours . . . yours. . . I love you. . .
I love you . . . all you. . .

BIANCA

[*Allowing him to seize her in his arms.*] I too
. . . Giacomo . . . why delay the admission?
I cannot hide my love from you. . . I too love
you, and long only to be yours forever more. . .

GIACOMO

Mine. . . Mine for ever. . .

BIANCA

Yes. . . Yes, I love you. . . I have always
loved you . . . but not even our new found hap-
piness can make me forget — not even for this
moment — the inexorable hatred I have sworn to
the Austrians and the sacred obligation to serve
my Country at this hour with all the force that
is mine . . . to-day everything must be sacrificed
for Country. Later in better days, if we come
out of this struggle alive, I promise fervently to
be yours . . . your wife. . .

GIACOMO

[*Pressing her to him passionately.*] My love,
my great, my only love.

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT IV.

[They remain embraced. The door squeaks and enter two Austrian officers, who take note of their embrace. They look around suspiciously searching every nook and corner, and their suspicion fastens especially on Bianca.]

[Bianca and Giacomo having exchanged a rapid glance of understanding approach quite naturally to the counter calling out:]

BIANCA AND GIACOMO

Hey, there, is there nobody about?

[The two officers seat themselves at a small table placed at the end of the room and from there they overlook everything.]

FIRST OFFICER

Ohé, mine host. . . .

[Baciccia appearing from his back-shop finds himself in front of Bianca and Giacomo, who give him a rapid hint to be careful, and he therefore answers them in the tone of a host speaking to casual guests.]

BACICCIA

You desire?

GIACOMO

Some Polcevera.

BIANCA

A warm drink.

ACT IV.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

FIRST OFFICER

[*Impatiently.*] Ay, host, how often have we to call you?

BACCICIA

Here I am.

[*Bianca and Giacomo have seated themselves at a table at the end of the room, so as to observe the two officers.*]

BACCICIA

[*After having served the two, advances slowly towards the Austrians, dragging his slippers.*]
You desire?

FIRST OFFICER

Some red wine!

BACCICIA

Immediately. [*Returns to the counter.*]

[*A silence, during which the two officers keep an eye on Bianca, and then in low voice.*]

SECOND OFFICER

[*Addressing the other.*] Is it she?

FIRST OFFICER

[*Shrugging his shoulders in sign of having doubts.*] It is rather difficult to recognise her, dressed as she is now.

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT IV.

GIACOMO

[Taking advantage of the noise which he makes by touching the bottle with the glass.] Is it he?

[Bianca affirms with an imperceptible movement of her head.]

[Baciccia serves the wine to the officers and returns to his counter.]

FIRST OFFICER

[Raging.] We are in a nice scrape. We should identify her! It is easily said. I, for my part, have only seen her but a few times, when I was on guard, and then she was dressed like a queen. The Marshal himself ought to come here to see, whether she is his niece, or not.

SECOND OFFICER

And if it is? To arrest the others and not her, would be awkward. To arrest her together with these rascals would be another and much worse mistake. The niece of His Excellency, the Marshal, involved in a conspiracy, what a scandal. . . . One can understand why the Marshal wanted every precaution taken before proceeding. . . .

FIRST OFFICER

[In a rage.] They have put us in a nice pickle. . . . How shall we come out of it? To say that

ACT IV.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

it is she, I cannot for sure. . . . True, there is a certain resemblance; but for me to assert downright, that it is she, is impossible.

SECOND OFFICER

If you believe it is not, let us arrest and conduct her to the Marshal. He himself has to decide. Anyhow, we certainly are in a den of brigands here. Notice, how those two take to one another, and yet apparently they do not belong to the same classes of society. Did you notice their embrace on our entrance — look like an ordinary pair of lovers.

FIRST OFFICER

And then arrest her? And we have no proofs; if she happens to be the niece of the Marshal our epaulettes are gone.

SECOND OFFICER

Let us skilfully question the host.

FIRST OFFICER

He looks to be too sly to be caught. He is a great rogue, I warrant! Don't you see it in his face? He will say nothing, but will try to deceive us. The best we can do is to refer the matter to the Marshal. Wait here in the neighbourhood. It is but a short distance from here,

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT IV.

where he is to be found, and he himself can come and decide what is to be done.

SECOND OFFICER

Do what you like, it is you, who commands.

FIRST OFFICER

[*In a fury.*] He shall try himself to recognise her! Besides, we shall thus give time to the others to arrive. We shall get a better netful. My orders are exact, everybody is to be arrested, the inn-keeper included. But here we have the mess with regard to her. . . . Believe me, let us refer to . . .

SECOND OFFICER

Oh! As for me. . . . [*Calling.*] Halloo, inn-keeper!

BACCICIA

[*Comes, always dragging his slippers.*] You desire?

FIRST OFFICER

[*Ironically.*] Few customers to-night!

BACCICIA

[*Circumspectly.*] It's early yet.

SECOND OFFICER

And when come the many?

ACT IV.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

BACCICIA

[*As above.*] It depends . . . according to the times . . . whether they have money in their pocket.

FIRST OFFICER

[*Contemptuously.*] According to you they are all poor people. . . . There never come rich people here?

BACCICIA

They don't seem to . . . what would they do here? Rich people have their coffee-houses.

FIRST OFFICER

[*Pointing out by a sign of his chin Giacomo, and always haughtily.*] And yet that one there does not look either like a workman or as if he belonged to the lower class.

BACCICIA

[*Promptly.*] That is a student, and everybody knows that students like artists go wherever they like. . . .

SECOND OFFICER

[*Haughtily.*] And . . . she?

BACCICIA

[*As above.*] She is a giddy-headed girl; she sells vegetables — fruits, etc., she owns a small

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT IV.

shop. . . . [*Winking slightly.*] They flirt a little . . . they are young. . . .

FIRST OFFICER

[*To the other.*] Ay! . . . As you said. [*Gets up and with him the other throws a coin on the table and clanking his spurs goes out, followed by the other.*]

[*When they are gone a cautious silence is observed. Then the three gather in a group, front stage.*]

GIACOMO

[*To the other two.*] Did you understand them?

BACICCIA

That what I did not understand I guess. [*To Bianca grasping her hand and pressing it strongly.*] Brave girl.

BIANCA

And now?

GIACOMO

We must go away, the sooner the better.

BIANCA

We have yet some minutes. At any rate we must await our companions. Not being advised they would be arrested all together — besides, here they are. [*She looks at the door which*

ACT IV.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

opens but instead of the companions she sees an unknown person, a short man, who is advancing rapidly towards them.]

BIANCA

[*In low voice to Baciccia.*] Who is he?

BACICCIA

[*Who too looks at the new-comer, and recognising him, says:*] No fear, it is Gigio, the barber, a friend.

GIGIO

[*Coming rapidly towards Baciccia.*] Baciccia, one word.

BACICCIA

You may speak freely. [*Pointing to the other two.*] We are among friends. Only be quick, we have no time to spare.

GIGIO

I know, it is exactly this I came for . . . you may be arrested any moment.

BACICCIA

This we know, and you, how do you know it?

GIGIO

A little German I understand by now. And I heard it said by these rascals of Austrians, whom

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT IV.

I am obliged to shave in my shop — and who not even pay me — Ah! How willingly [*makes a gesture as to cut their heads off*] I should like to shave them as they deserve. But they do not trust me and always come in threes. Well, they leapt for joy this morning having a stroke on hand, and I just burned to run here . . . in order to warn you . . . but I did not dare to leave my shop before, for fear of rousing their suspicions. . . . As soon as I was able I hurried here.

GIACOMO

We all thank you. . . .

GIGIO

You may thank me if you put yourselves in safety without losing any time . . . we must be many to-morrow in Portoria.

BIANCA

Yes, truly . . . but we must await our friends. Good, here they are.

GIGIO

I entreat you, not to linger . . . you have not a minute. [*Exit.*]

[*Rolla, Roca, Giacobini, Massa, Pastore, Beppe, Balilla enter.*]

ACT IV.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

GIACOMO

[*Alarmed.*] How imprudent to come like this all together!

ROLLA

We have but just met at the door.

BIANCA

And you did not see anybody? Has anybody seen you?

BALILLA

Nobody. Besides, every precaution is useless to-night. To-morrow we all meet in the square.

GIACOMO

That's why you must be wary to-night.

BEPPE

They shan't take our cannon away, I warrant you. . . . We shall be there to defend it.

ROLLA

The people are no longer to be held.

GIACOBINI

There is the greatest excitement; scarcely is a crowd dispersed another forms.

ROCA

The rendez-vous is in Portoria. All my friends will be there.

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT IV.

ALL THE OTHERS TOGETHER

And mine . . . and mine. . . .

GIACOMO

Very well, but just now we must disperse. And the sooner the better, we may get arrested any moment here.

ALL TOGETHER

"How is that?"—"What news have you?"
—"Why?"—

BIANCA

Two Austrian officers have just left this place. Evidently, they know about our meetings . . . they would have arrested us, if . . .

GIACOMO

[*Intervening.*] In a few words . . . we have scarcely time to get out . . . they have gone to fetch reinforcements. . . .

BEPPE

They will arrive too late. . . . Only let me tell you one word, and afterwards we shall be off. . . . I have a good job on hand, a magnificent idea . . . besides already approved of by my friends. Listen! [*They gather still closer around him and always in low voice.*] Listen! You know then, that to-morrow after sunset one

ACT IV.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

of our cannons will pass by the Via Portoria to be borne away by the Austrians. . . . Well, we are going to pass this night in loosening the stones of the pavement. That is to stop the cannon. What do you think of my idea?

[*All in chorus, but always in low voice:*]

We shall all be there to-night to help you and your friends. . . .

BEPPE

No, no, we shall be already many, and the work must be done quickly and with skill as the stones removed must be loosely replaced again. It would help us more, if you could remain about the neighbourhood and warn us, if you see the enemy.

GIACOMO

It remains thus agreed. But now let us go; hurry!

BALILLA

Let us go! [*Is going to the entrance-door.*]

BIANCA

Halt! [*She runs to entrance-door and looks out, quickly bolts the door and with her back to it says:*] Not out this way—they may be approaching. Pass by the back-shop door! [*To Baciccia who hesitates.*] Yes, you too, all! Only, before you go I want to show the Senate's

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT IV.

agreement; [*she waves it*] and I give it to Giacomo to show to you later and the people, should they still wish to see it. You men are needed tomorrow, so out with you now quickly, escape! Quickly, I will hold them at bay till you make off. Away all!

BACCICIA

Bravo, brave girl! Bravo! And I doubted her!

ALL

[*In hushed tones.*] Brava! Brava!

[*Exeunt hurriedly through back-shop, all but Giacomo, who lingers behind.*]

GIACOMO

[*To Bianca.*] You must come with us!

BIANCA

[*Resolutely.*] No, I remain here.

GIACOMO

You really intend to remain?

BIANCA

Yes, what danger can I be exposed to?

GIACOMO

[*Highly alarmed.*] But, here they are coming back any minute, they will make you prisoner.

ACT IV.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

BIANCA

They will come back with the Marshal. He will come to convince himself, whether I am really amongst the conspirators. And recognising me he will not run the risk of provoking a scandal. Also for my father's sake he will be wary what he does. . . . Therefore it is better I remain. It would be more imprudent to return home, where they can closely watch for me, where else can I be expected to spend the night? . . . To me it matters that I want to be free to-morrow!

GIACOMO

[*Beseechingly.*] I entreat you. . . .

BIANCA

[*Tossing her head.*] It is useless for you to insist, time urges, this is no time for arguing. . . . Go! I beg of you, they must be near. [*Resolutely pushing him towards the door of the back-shop.*] Go!

[*The entrance-door is tried and found locked. A knock without.*]

GIACOMO

[*In low voice.*] No, I remain. I shall not leave you so.

BIANCA

[*In low voice.*] Foolish, you a man like the others, who have just hurried off, are needed more

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE. [ACT IV.

than I to-morrow. Have you not said so before?

[*Shouts from without: "OPEN! OPEN!"*]
pounding is heard.

BIANCA

Go, if you love me, but your Country first. I am safe here; I swear it.

[*She is still standing back to the now heaving entrance-door; then rushes towards Giacomo, embracing him and forcing the Senate's paper into his hand, pushes him into the back-shop, then quickly to counter, crossing her arms.*]

[*A pause.— Then the entrance-door of the inn breaks in, and on its threshold appears the Marshal with the two above mentioned officers — soldiers outside.*]

MARSHAL

[*Looking around.*] Nobody here?

[*To the officers jeeringly.*] And this the den of the brigands? [*Seeing Bianca.*] Ah! a woman. . . . [*To the officers.*] Is that the one?

FIRST OFFICER

Yes, your Excellency.

MARSHAL

[*To Bianca.*] Approach! . . . Are you alone?
. . . Where are the others?

ACT IV.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

BIANCA

I am alone.

MARSHAL

[*Startled by the sound of the voice.*] What
— you dare say —

BIANCA

That I am alone. . . .

MARSHAL

[*In rage.*] Come nearer! . . . Quickly! . . .

BIANCA

[*Taking leisurely a few steps towards the Marshal.*] Is it necessary that I come near you, uncle, for you to recognise me?

MARSHAL

[*Highly excited.*] You!! In truth. You!!
So they've really told me the truth. . . . You
. . . here in this den . . . amongst the dregs
. . . and in that costume . . . you . . . you. . . .
[*Choking in rage.*] Disgrace!! Damnable!!!

BIANCA

[*Calmly.*] Is this all you have to say to me, uncle?

MARSHAL

Answer me, where are the others? Who are they? Who are they?

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT IV.

BIANCA

Where they are? I cannot now tell you. . . .

MARSHAL

This is no time for making fun; answer quickly, where are they . . . who your . . . [*with utmost contempt*] . . . your jolly fellows? . . . Answer! Or I shall immediately have you arrested.

BIANCA

Your threatening is quite useless, uncle. If I do not wish to answer you, nothing on earth can induce me to do it. Fortunately, I am ready to answer you; you wish to know, who my companions are. . . . [*Speaking very slowly to waste time.*] Well, . . . amongst them . . . there is . . . a poet, . . . we chose . . . him, . . . so that, when . . . the . . . Austrians . . . are . . . driven . . . away . . . from here, he shall sing a hymn of liberty. And amongst them there is a sculptor, who is to erect a monument of liberty more lasting than bronze itself. And with us is also an impoverished stevedore, who has joined us, because he wants his beautiful azure Mediterranean free . . . and further there is with us a merchant, who is rebelling over your greedy seizure of his goods, and he is therefore striving with all his might for the liberty of trade and —

ACT IV.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

MARSHAL

[*White with rage.*] You make fun of me . . .

BIANCA

Oh, no, uncle, I narrate nothing but the truth, the simple and pure truth. . . . Ah! no, I forgot, with us is also a boy, a brave boy of fourteen years, all fire and energy. . . . This proves also that in the new generation too there is a sacred horror of your oppression, and too there is indomitable hatred of the Austrians!! I told you, uncle, you played with fire. . . .

MARSHAL

[*Who is frothing with rage turning to the officers.*] Arrest her!

BIANCA

[*Stopping with a look the officers, who advance one step towards her.*] One moment, uncle,—Think it over well before you dare to have me, your niece, touched by your policemen. . . . Besides, the disgrace of it . . . remember . . . you came here to get a netful of conspirators. . . . And instead you find a woman, and this woman is your niece, and should you have her arrested . . . so as not to return from your noble mission with empty hands, don't you see the ridiculousness of it all, you, who so peacefully allow so many in-

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT IV.

families to be committed in your name, it would certainly be painful to you to expose yourself to ridicule.

MARSHAL

[*As above.*] Arrest her! . . . Take her! . . .

[*Again the officers move a step towards Bianca, but she again stops them with a look and an imperious gesture.*]

BIANCA

[*Suddenly presents a pistol and points it to her bosom.*] Take care, uncle, you will not get me alive . . . death does not frighten me . . . it is not taking anything from me, on the contrary, it adds a glory, that you do not know; namely that of dying for an ideal . . . but I am not alone . . . and my father will ask you to account for me, his daughter, who is ready to kill herself, because you forced her to it. . . . You are used to stain yourself with fraternal blood true . . . but not to this point. . . . Believe me . . . let me go. . . . I swear to you, you will always find me ready in your path and so be able to revenge yourself without trouble. . . . Now, dead or alive I should give you some . . . far-reaching. . . . LET ME GO! . . .

[*The officers turn to the marshal as if for instructions.*]

ACT IV.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

MARSHAL

[To the officers, more by motion of hand than by words.] Let her go!

BIANCA

[Always with the pistol pointed to her breast and walking backwards to the entrance-door.]

[Before disappearing she stops on the sill and says ironically.] Well done, uncle, this is the first time you have acted with discretion. . . .

CURTAIN

FIFTH ACT

Various groups of men and women appear on the square of Portoria, coming from the heights of Piccapietra and from the Hospital hill. Some groups are brought here by Baciccia, others by Beppe, others by Balilla. Other groups formed by people of the middle classes are led by Giacobini Pastore, Massa, Rolla, Roca. Bianca leads a mixed group, mostly women grim-faced and threatening. Little by little the groups mix, whilst they exchange in low excited voices words and queries.

Giacomo enters from the opposite side to Bianca. Scarcely does he see her, than he makes his way by force through the crowd to join her.

A MAN OF THE PEOPLE

[To another, after having looked down from the ascent of Piccapietra.] They ought to be here.

ANOTHER MAN OF THE PEOPLE

It is still early.

THIRD MAN OF THE PEOPLE

It is only a little while ago they left Castelletto.

ACT v.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

A WOMAN

The cannon will never go back there.

ANOTHER WOMAN

Hein! Then we shall die here.

VARIOUS VOICES AS IN MANNER TO A CALL
Every one of us! Every one!

GIACOMO

[*To Bianca.*] What happiness to see you again. If you knew what terrible hours I have passed! . . .

BIANCA

It is our lot to pass such — but now the *great* hour has come.

GIACOMO

[*Looking at her somewhat in dismay and somewhat in admiration.*] Always indomitable!

BIANCA

Always. . . .

GIACOMO

How did you settle with the Marshal?

BIANCA

Very well, indeed. I told him so much, that he finally understood that the most reasonable thing would be to let me go. . . .

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT V.

GIACOMO

I waited for you here the whole night. . . .
Not meeting you, I imagined of course the worst
. . . you can understand in what anguish I have
been.

BIANCA

I could not come to join you here. I found
refuge with one of my humble companions of faith.
[*Pointing to a woman of the people, not far from
her.*]

GIACOMO

[*Resolutely.*] Now I shall never leave you
again! Never!

BIANCA

Until death. . . .

GIACOMO

Oh, Bianca! . . .

BIANCA

[*Giving him a clear, and meaning look.*] I say
it, Giacomo, for you as well as for me.

[*During the dialogue some women begin in low
voice to sing the Paraphrases of the "Salve Re-
gina," and some bits of verses are heard.*]

Del ciel Regina

Vergine bella

Siete la Stella

Del nostre Mar.

Of Heaven the Queen,

Beautiful Virgin

Serene, thou art

The Star of our sea.

ACT V.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

Misericordia
fra tanti guai
degnate ormai
con noi usar.

Midst our great
woe deign thou
to us mercy.

Ad te clamamus
Col vostro nome
in vita e in morte
la nostra sorte ha da
regnar

In Thy name,
In life, in death
Our fate doth rest.

La voce adunque
A Voi Maria
Per ogni via
Vogliamo alzar.

To Thee, O Maria,
Whatever betide,
Our voices
We raise.

O clemens
O quanto siete
Con noi clemente
Lo sa la gente
Voi proverá
Col Vostro braccio
Vedr  atterrata
D'Austria l'armata.
Trionfer . . . .

In Thy clemency to us,
To Thee we bind
Our Faith.
By Thy aid,
O'er the Austrian arms
Will we,
The People,
Triumph! . . .

[*Faint voices of a crowd are heard, approaching from the heights of Piccapietra.*] They come!
They come!

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT V.

[*The crowd stirs back and forth obstructing the houses of the square. Beppe to a companion, pointing to turned up pavement of the square proudly.*]

BEPPE

We have worked all night. . . .

THE ONE ADDRESSED

[*In same way.*] Now we will see, whether they are able to get through.

A WOMAN TO ANOTHER

We have done well to pray to our Holy Virgin Maria. . . .

ANOTHER WOMAN

[*With conviction.*] Truly, and the most Holy Virgin Maria will help us.

A MAN OF THE PEOPLE

[*In the same tone.*] Yes; she must help us. Is she not the Protectress of the city?

ANOTHER MAN

Of our Genoa.

ONE OF ANOTHER GROUP

[*As if continuing a speech begun.*] Do the poltroons for a moment think, that we shall allow them to take away our cannons?

ACT V.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

AGAIN ONE OF A THIRD GROUP

The cursed Austrians trusted too much in the patience of the Genoese people.

ANOTHER

They little know us.

ANOTHER

They will find us ready here. . . . And to-morrow; and after to-morrow!

MASSA TO PASTORE

[*Pointing out the crowded square.*] What an inspiring sight is it to see aroused at last the temper, the might of an outraged people.

PASTORE

Truly! It is worth painting.

BALILLA

[*To Beppe, rubbing his hands.*] I have never before enjoyed myself so much.

BEPPE

There is more diversion ahead.

[*The voices from afar draw nearer and intensify, and becoming distinct one hears the cry "Let us pass" . . . "Let us pass" . . .*]

[*The crowd moves together in a mass, crying:*]

What is wrong? What is the matter? . . .

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT V.

[*Enter a number of people surrounding a small group of men, carrying a man wounded in the head. The head of the wounded man is roughly bandaged in a flag which hangs down his shoulders. The crowd rushes to the group interrogating:*] What is it? What has happened?

[*The group is stopped by the massing of the crowd. One of them narrates excitedly:*] We are taking him to the hospital. These renegades of Austrians did it. . . . They cudgelled him, because he cried: "That cannon must not be taken out of Genoa."

ALL IN CHORUS

And it shall not be. . . . It shall not. . . .

GIACOMO

[*Pushing through the crowd and placing himself before the wounded man removes his cap, and says:*] I greet thee in the name of all of us here assembled, in the name of the People. I greet thee. Thou it was, who first courageously saidst the word which like a dreadful cry of defence and revenge fills with courage our ardent breasts . . . and we thank thee, we thank thee for having said it . . . and for having offered thy young blood first of all of us for the sacred cause . . . our enemies thought of doing away with thee, subduing

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thee forever . . . yet in the fact that we see thee right before us . . . bearing the flag dyed in thy blood is to us an incentive, an inspiration now to strive on . . . with this badge of honour thou showest the way to the people, eager to obtain the liberation of their soil, the people hungry and thirsty, who in themselves are stirred by the inextinguishable craving of offering their blood for the ever to be desired end.— Therefore we swear to thee here and now to dry thy mother's tears, and we pledge thee that revenge and victory shall reach her ear . . . and we shall ask her blessing as she will bless thee! Men and women of the People! *Long Live Liberty!!!*

THE CROWD ANSWERS WITH A FORMIDABLE ECHO: ..

Long Live Liberty!!!

[Not far off is now heard the approach of the rumbling wheels of a cannon. The crowd listening, suddenly grows silent, as if preparing for the supreme proof . . . then separates to let pass the group bearing the wounded man, which rapidly disappears towards the hospital. Now commences a hurried going to and fro of the people on the small square, rushing here and there in the small space left free by the crowd withdrawn against the houses.] They come . . . They come . . . they come. . . .

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT V.

A MAN'S VOICE

And now the time is here for us. . . .

[Many, especially the women, make the sign of the cross murmuring prayers. Again one hears the name of the Virgin Mary.]

A MAN'S VOICE

[Always in low voice.] For our sons . . .
for our life. . . .

OTHERS

[As consecrating to a holy promise.] For us
and for our children — Liberty!!!

[The cannon appears from the ascent of Piccapietra amidst much ado of tugging and holding in check by ropes. It is surrounded by Austrian soldiers commanded by officers with drawn swords. These look grimly and suspiciously as they note the dense crowd assembled in the square. The crowd keeps silence, but grows more compact. At the windows overlooking the square, people's heads appear as if to witness a spectacle. In the meantime the cannon with much pains is jerked along the torn-up pavement by the Austrian soldiers, with little or no result, whilst in the crowd a low and jesting laugh is heard: "Ay," "Ay."]

[Suddenly the cannon comes to a halt, almost overturned, and in spite of the herculean efforts

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of the Austrian soldiers cannot be budged. The officers call to the crowd, commanding imperiously:] Quick! Some of you here help, be quick about it now! . . .

[The immovable crowd jeer at them loudly.] Ah! Ah! Ah! [The officers furiously call:] Here, here, quick now, lend a hand!

[The crowd remains immovable and laughs. The officers losing their patience make signs to the soldiers to go at them with the sticks which they bear in their hands.]

[Then Balilla, who has climbed on the rails of a balcony with a rock in hand hurls it violently at a group of soldiers, as he cries out with all his might —] Who begins! "Che l'inse!" Who begins!

[This is the signal of the fight which opens between the soldiers and the people. The people throw stones, paving blocks, anything on hand at the Austrians, who defend themselves; the soldiers with sticks and the officers with swords. The officers make an attempt to push the people back against the houses, lunging at them with their swords.]

BIANCA

[Who has boldly advanced towards the soldiers with a big stone in her hand, cries out:] Come

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT V.

on! Come on now, people! Now is the time!
At them!

[Suddenly Bianca is pierced by an officer's sword, (one of the officers of the inn) which transfixes her despite Giacomo, who on rushing towards her, seeing her danger, had tried at all cost to parry the sudden thrust. Bianca falls and would be trampled on by the maddened fighting crowd, if Baciccia and Giacomo did not succeed by agonising effort in bearing her away, and propping her against a neighbouring house. In the meantime the people cry furiously] "Liberty!" "Death to the Austrians!" *[and by great exertions and fury master the soldiery, pursuing them out of the square, crying:]* VICTORY! Victory! Long Live Liberty! Long Live our Genoa!

[The cries diminish in fury as the crowd increases the distance of pursuit. By this time the square is almost empty. Baciccia, Beppe, and Giacomo are around Bianca, whom they have lain on the ground against the wall of the house.]

GIACOMO

[Wild in sorrow and fright.] Quick, quick!
In God's name — a doctor.

[Beppe about to run off to fetch one —; but Bianca says in a feeble voice.] It is useless, I die.

ACT V.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

GIACOMO

[*Almost crazed.*] No, no, my Bianca, my loved one. It cannot be.

BIANCA

[*In a very low voice and pointing to the cannon with a vanishing gesture.*] Let me recline, not here . . . there. . . .

GIACOMO

[*Who has not understood her, in desperation.*] What does she say?

BEPPE AND BACICCIA

[*Who have understood her words.*] Together!
[*As they lift Bianca with much care with the aid of Giacomo towards the cannon.*]

BIANCA

[*Raises herself with much fatigue and embraces with one arm the barrel of the cannon, saying to Giacomo.*] Now I can die happy.

GIACOMO

[*Kneeling near her.*] My Bianca, mine for ever. . . .

BIANCA

[*Embracing him painfully and with the other arm patting the cannon—a look of happy*

THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE [ACT V.

ecstasy bespreads her countenance.] It is safe!
It is safe! My Genoa, My People!

GIACOMO

Yes, yes, it is safe, but you. . . .

BIANCA

What does my life matter? . . . Our great
country. . . . Don't weep! Smile!

GIACOMO

[As if in a stupor.] Yes, yes . . . I weep
not . . . I smile . . . I am with you . . . shall
always be with you . . . you feel I hold you
in my arms . . . nothing, nothing can part me
from you . . . not now and never . . . could
one try to separate us . . . 'twould not avail
. . . for we love one another . . . we are one
till death and after . . . my love . . . my love
. . . my love. . . .

BIANCA

[Feebly.] I did, what I had to . . .

GIACOMO

Yes, yes . . . what you felt to be your duty
. . . now rest . . . sleep, darling, sleep. . . . I
shall watch by your side . . . better than a father
. . . better even than a mother. . . . For I am
Love. . . . Love . . . sleep . . . sleep. . . .

ACT V.] THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE

[*Here Balilla breaks in from the direction of the hospital height carried in triumph by the people, who with him cry:*] Victory!! Victory is Ours!!!

GIACOMO

[*Making a sign for silence, pointing out to them Bianca who has her head leaned on his shoulder, her eyes shut.*] Sssstttt! She sleeps.

BIANCA

[*Opening her eyes utters with feeble voice.*] No, no. . . . Victory . . . Victory. . . . The People! [*Falls back dead in Giacomo's arms.*]

GIACOMO

[*Embracing her in desperation.*] Victory . . . Victory. . . .

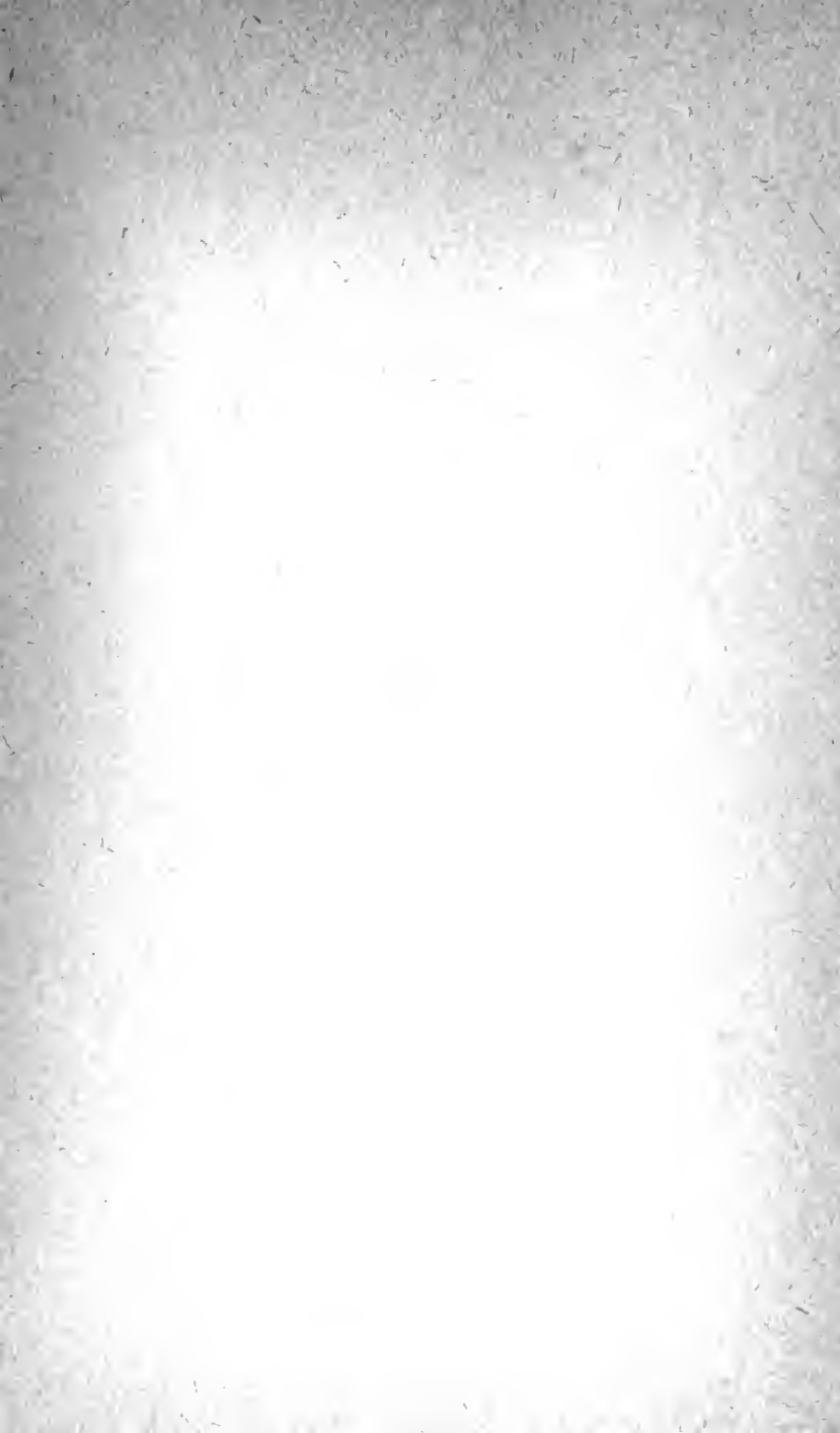
[*In the distance is heard again the chorus of the Salve Regina.*]

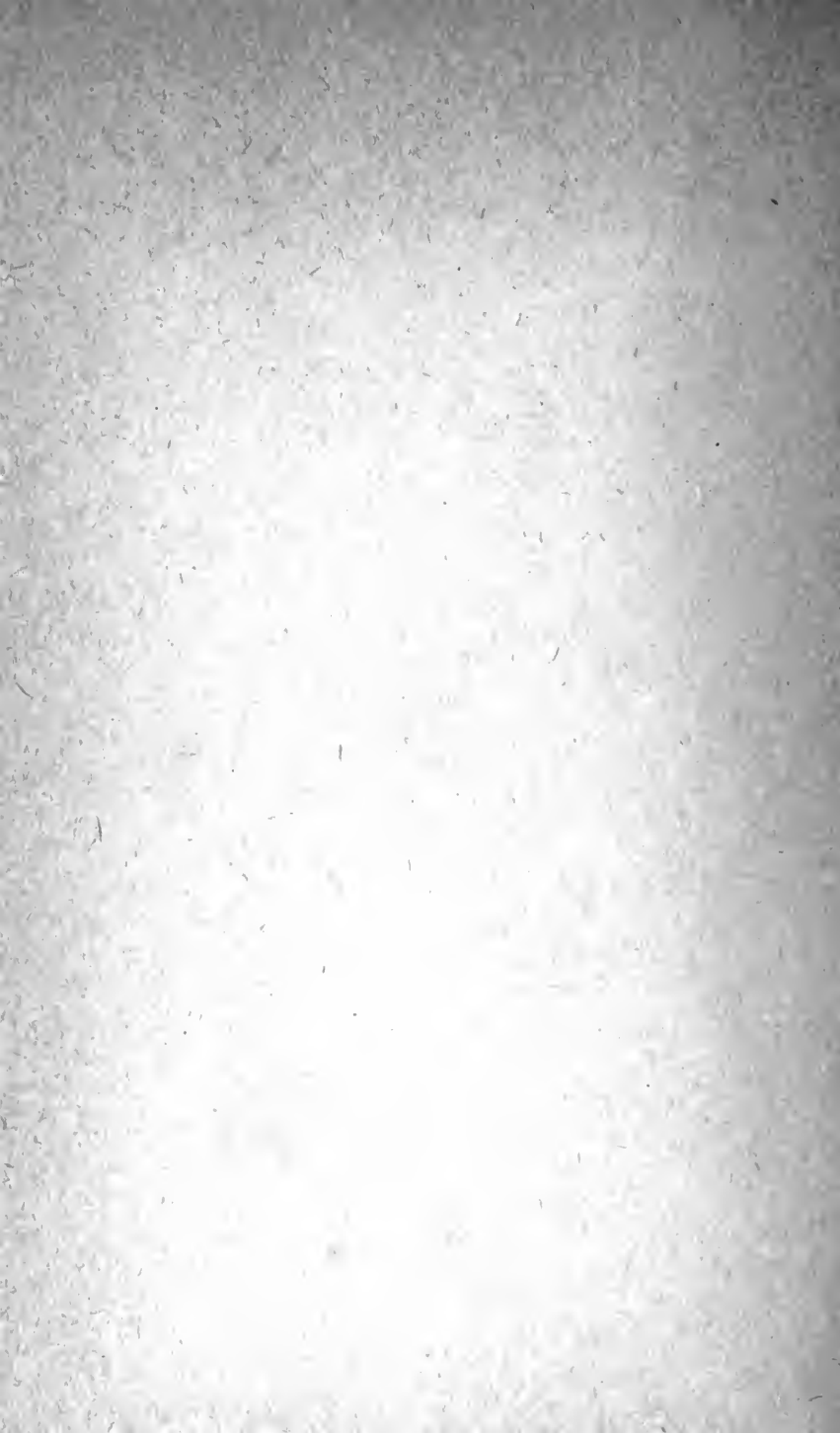
O quanto siete
Con noi clemente
Lo sa la gente
Voi proverá
Col Vostro braccio
Vedr  atterrata
D'Austria l'armata.
Trionfer . . . .

In Thy clemency to us
To Thee we bind
Our Faith.
By Thy aid,
O'er the Austrian arms
Will we,
The People,
Triumph! . . .

CURTAIN









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